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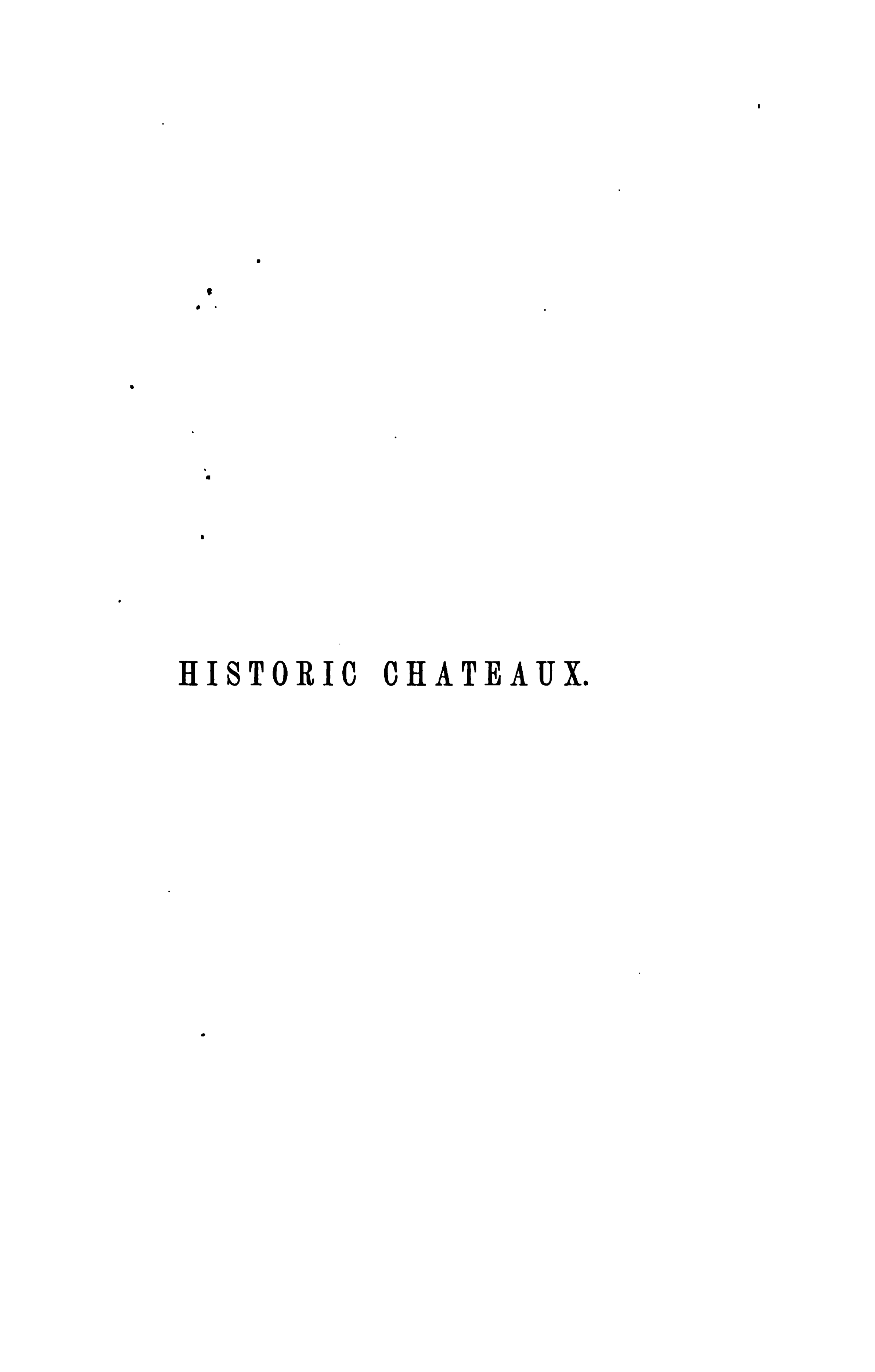
HISTORIC CHATEAUX:

BLOIS, FONTAINEBLEAU, VINCENNES.

BY

LLIE COCHRANE, M.P.





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IN ONE VOLUME.



LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS.
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1877.

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THE CHATEAU OF BLOIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE architecture, style, and character of ancient buildings enables us often to recall the events with which they have been associated; the old stern feudal tower at once carries the mind back to the Middle Ages; the ancient abbey with its cloisters, mullioned windows, and lonely aisles we people with pale penitents and gray-clad monks; the palace with its plaisance suggests pictures of gay pageants and festive scenes, graceful dames and gallant knights. If we wish to find all variety of such historical association we must turn to the Touraine—there castle, abbey, and palace are to be found in close proximity, each with its own possession of his-

toric interest. To recall the names of the castles and palaces of which this province is possessed, is to recall the most interesting epochs of French history—Chambord, Chenonceaux, Amboise, Blois, Plessis-le-Tours, what varied scenes do these names not evoke. Chambord with its picturesque towers and pinnacles, light balustrades and flying buttresses, rich in all the ornamentation of the Renaissance, which Primaticcio scattered with lavish hand on all the buildings which he touched and adorned, no gloomy thoughts can dwell in such a creation; there we recall François I. in his early joyous days when the princely edifice rose as by the "touch of the enchanter's wand;" we move through spacious halls adorned with exquisite frescoes, through magnificent corridors, which the grace and beauty of the French Court loved to frequent; here are no "dark records of blood and crime," all speaks of life and light, love and pleasure; then descend the Loire for a few miles, and the Château of Blois in all its gloomy grandeur fills the mind with very different fancies.

In its historic interest, the Château of Blois

stands unrivalled in France. Gazing for the first time on its picturesque outline, the mind is overpowered by the number of recollections which crowd upon it; for in its varied architecture it represents the varied life of France, the different epochs of its history are recorded in its stone, for those who care to study its details —the feudal times may be traced in the massive walls of the gloomy keep, the façade built by Louis XII. marks the transition from the days of darkness and suspicion to kinder and gentler relations beneath the monarch and his people. François I. added a court remarkable for its grace and lightness, strangely contrasting with the donjon, the work of Louis XI. Finally, Mansard, under Louis XIV., lavished large sums in fortunately a futile attempt to give to the different styles a unity of design which he considered most in harmony with an absolute monarchy.

The taste of modern restoration has, within the château itself, ruthlessly destroyed much that was interesting to the historian and the artist, many of the rich arabesque patterns, the sculptured wood-work, the frescoes, and

dimly lighted stairs and passages have been what is called restored; but, in fact, have been sacrificed to the spirit of innovation; the state apartments have been redecorated, and many an interesting record of the past has been buried for ever under gilt and plaster; heavy timbered roofs, darkened by centuries, have been painted blue and dotted with stars; brilliant colours meet the eye in all directions; the fleurs-de-lys, the love-knots of Catharine and Henri, the salamanders of François I. are all regilt; and too little is left to the imagination, there is no longer the "light that half conceals the beauty it reveals," for many a window has been enlarged, and the old stained glass replaced by modern designs. Stamped leather covers walls formerly divided into panels, each of which contained a different moulding; but all this gorgeousness and extravagance has failed to destroy the grandeur and interest even of the interior. The exterior remains as it was; no sacrilegious hand has ventured to touch it. Gloomy, stern, and feudal the Castle remains, overlooking the wide vast panorama of the valley of the Loire

rolling rapidly, the torrent *révolutionnaire* of later days,* and the tortuous picturesque town at the foot of the rock on which the Castle stands. No gilding or painting can remove the sinister impressions which cling, like the ivy, to these massive gloomy walls; dark and sad imaginings fill the minds of those whose footsteps echo through the deserted halls, and the student of History will recall many crimes and tragic incdents of which this château has been the theatre; probably no other in France has witnessed so many deeply interesting and mournful events. And of all these tragedies none fills a more prominent place in history, or men's minds, than the tragedy of 1588.

Standing on the terrace of the castle it is difficult to reconcile its massive pile, which recalls the stirring events of stirring times, with the peaceful landscape which expands far and wide around it, for fair meadows, rich woodlands, golden crops, and vine clad hills, all combine to make the Touraine the granary and garden of France.

* "Quel torrent révolutionnaire que cette Loire," exclaimed Barrère.

In Summer the air is redolent with perfume, and wild flowers cling to the walls even of the fortress; in beauty and interest no part of France can surpass the Touraine, and no river flows through any land richer in associations and recollections of the past than the Loire. It has been truly observed that the Loire may be called the National river, it was on its banks that it was frequently purposed to found the capital of France. Louis XI. for some time intended that Tours should replace Paris, not only on account of the salubrity of the climate and the richness of its soil, but because it occupied so much more central a position. Louis XIV. entertained the same idea after Ramilies; during the reigns of Charles VII. and Henry III., the Loire was the theatre of the destinies of France; the House of Valois took root there and lavished their favours on all the adjacent country; Rabelais called the Touraine "le pays de rire, et de ne rien faire," as the sovereigns erected stately castles or magnificent châteaux, the cavaliers of the court grouped themselves around them, hence the number of campagnes and plaisances with which the province

abounds, all in a greater or less degree associated with interesting or national events. What great historic names suggest themselves to the mind, what romantic incidents crowd the memory, how many

"Heroes, statesmen, kings, in dust repose,"

who were born in the Touraine since the days of Louis XI. They sweep in grand procession before us, the brave, the chivalrous, the beautiful, among fair women the most fair. Margaret of Valois, Margaret of Anjou, and the single-hearted daughter of Domrémy—here in the Touraine, the poet, artist, and historian for all arts move hand in hand, may find full scope for their genius, the history of France in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is greatly the history of the province.

Close to the Château of Blois stands a building erected on the remains of a lonely tower, by one whose name will never be forgotten—in this observatory Catherine de Medicis consulted the stars with the astrologer Ruggieri, and strove to read the future. Over the entrance were inscribed

the words Uraniæ Sacrum, it was a temple of superstitious observances but dedicated to the Virgin, who was represented there clad in azure-coloured robes, and crowned with stars—was it that Catharine desired to invoke that Fate and Destiny, that imperious necessity which the Greek tragedians introduced on the scene to extenuate if not to justify great crimes, or did she think to make Heaven a partner in her bold projects and schemes of ambition.

We will turn from the dreary Winter of Catharine de Medicis' existence to the springtime of her life. She was born on the 18th of April, 1519—the future Queen, the Regent and Queen-Mother of France, and destined to fill so great a place in the history of her time. Few characters have been so variously interpreted; extolled by some as an example worthy to be followed, by others denounced by terrible epithets—in one point all agree, that few lives have ever been so chequered and troubled. It was in very early years that Catharine brought to France that charm of Italian grace, the love of art and of the beautiful, which aided the development of the taste already introduced by

Francis I. As to her personal appearance, here again historians are divided. Antonio Sorriano says, "The Duchess is lively, affable in her character, and distinguished in her manners; her features are delicate, and her eyes project like all the family of the Medicis." But there exists a more flattering portrait by Brantôme; he praises—"Elle possède une tenue belle et majestueuse, mais en même temps gracieuse, son expression est agréable, son goût dans la toilette excellent, elle a une belle taille, le teint blanc, des petits pieds, et des mains superbes."

On another occasion he says :—

"Elle était de fort belle et riche taille, de grande majesté; toutefois fort douce quand il fallait, de belle apparance et bonne grâce, le visage beau et agréable, la gorge très belle et blanche, fort belle aussi par le corps; du reste la plus belle main que ne fût jamais veue, si crois je—les poétes ont loués jadis Aurore pour avoir de belles mains et de beaux doigts, mais je crois que la Reyne l'eust effacée en tout celà aussi la toujours gardé et maintenue jusqu'à sa mort."

How little can we trace in this description

the Queen of the Civil Wars, of the League, of St. Bartholomew, or how little does it agree with the description of her as given by her enemies ?

At this time, however, whatever her subsequent history as the fair *fiancée* of the Duke of Orleans, Catharine had won the affections of all the Florentines. When, in 1533, she was to leave her native home for France, the city presented her with the most magnificent jewels and embroideries of pearl on cloth of gold. The historians delight to expatiate on the grandeur and magnificence which adorned the youngest of the Medicis family.

" Verdeggia un ramo sol con poca foglia."

One necklace of pearls is mentioned of fabulous price, which she subsequently gave to Mary of Scotland, who, in a picture at Holyrood, is represented in the fullness of her loveliness, with the coil of pearls round her fair neck. Francis I. was not inferior in generosity, and amongst other gifts he presented her with the Château of Gien in the Touraine, thus adding one more to the associations of Catharine with that province.

That nothing might be wanting to the grandeur and dignity of these espousals, Clement VII. resolved to celebrate them in person, and on no festal occasion or princely progress had greater pomps been displayed. The fleet that was to escort the Sovereign Pontiff from Leghorn consisted of sixty sail. Catharine preceded the Pope in a galley with sails of purple cloth embroidered with gold. She was accompanied by a French fleet, the standard of France and the fleur de lys flying side by side with that of the great Italian Republic. Rarely has Provence witnessed a nobler fleet, or one bearing grander destinies, coasting its beautiful shores. But a few years had passed since another fleet had escorted Francis I. by the shores of his beloved France to his captivity in Spain, and now the daughter of the Medicis was borne across the same waters to the land of her adoption. It was, however, for the reception of the Sovereign Pontiff that France sent forth to bid His Holiness welcome all that was most noble and illustrious. His Holiness was attended by ten Cardinals; Archbishops,

Bishops, and countless Prelates followed in his train. His ship, which bore the Royal Banner, with the keys of St. Peter, was preceded by a large galley, on the deck of which an altar was erected where the sacred elements and the richest sacramental plate were displayed. Genoa the Superba manned her whole fleet, commanded by Doria in person, to do honour to "Le Serviteur de Dieu."

Anne de Montmorency, Marshal and Grand-Master of France, was sent by Francis I. to greet the Pope on his arrival at Marseilles. The day was closing in when the united squadrons of France, Italy, and Genoa were signalled; then the bonfires were lit on the rocky summit of Notre Dame de la Garde and the Island of the Château d'If. As the fleets drew near, the whole city blazed with light; every dome, tower, and spire of the queen of commercial cities was brought into bold relief; on the wild mountain sides, amid the vineyards and olive-groves, wherever there was a cottage, lights shone forth a welcome to the Pope and the future Queen of France. When the fleet anchored

under the shelter of the numerous islands, whole salvoes of artillery re-echoed amid the amphitheatre of hills.

We are told that no sight was ever witnessed in France so interesting and magnificent as the meeting of the Pope and Francis. Marseilles had learnt from Spain the art of sumptuous street decoration. Costly velvets and curiously wrought cloths were displayed from every balcony. Provence on that day exhausted her stores of perfumes and flowers, for wreaths and garlands of the deep-hued damask rose mingled with the lilies of France, and were suspended in garlands across the streets. The Pope was borne on a magnificent throne, preceded by the consecrated elements; the Cardinals in all their splendour of purple and lace and scarlet, and the clergy in their order, followed, chaunting the *Te Deum;* and then came the fair daughter of Italy, whom all crowded to see, while the noblest ladies of France and Italy formed her court of grace and loveliness. On the Quay where His Holiness landed stood the King. "No man ever possessed," says Brantôme, "a grander

presence than His Majesty on such occasions, even amidst a Court of the most finished and complete gentlemen." The Princes of the Blood were collected round him—the Duke of Vendôme, the Count of Saint-Paul, the Duke of Nemours, the Prince of Savoy, the Sieurs of Montpeusier and De la Roche-sur-Yon, the Duke of Albany; the Ambassadors and Ministers of State were present, and all the most illustrious houses in France were there represented. The King reverently knelt to kiss the Pope's hand, and lovingly embraced the bride whose life was henceforth to be blended with the history of France: then in the spirit of that age, the procession turned towards the shrine of Notre Dame de la Garde, where the Pope added a richly carved Cross to the *ex votos* which were suspended on the walls, placed there either in grateful recollection of mercies received, of loving memories, or the expression of hopes in the future.

> "Tabulâ sacer
> Votivâ pareis indicat."

On the return from this religious ceremony,

the marriage took place in the old Church of St. Victor, a fitting place, as it was built by Pope Urban V., who was at one time Abbot of St. Victor. The Pope himself performed the ceremony, and never was bridal accompanied by more fervent benedictions.*

And here commences the new life of Catharine de Medicis. With her Italian nature will henceforth be engrafted the gentler characteristics of the French nation. The young bride brought from Italy that love of science and of all that is beautiful in art which was the proudest possession of the illustrious House of Medicis. The Louvre, the Tuileries, Fontainebleau, every palace which Catharine de Medicis occupied, afford evidence of her innate admirable taste; but she inherited from her ancestors, with these most excellent qualifications for a ruler, ambition, and a recklessness of nature which was soon apparent to so quick a judge of character as was Francis I.; but who on this joyous occasion, amid these festive scenes, surrounded by everything that could convey

* Appendix I.

confidence, love, and hope in the future, amid the acclamations and rejoicings of the assembled thousands—who could foresee on what a waste of dark and troubled waters her life was to be cast?

CHAPTER II.

THE lights and shadows that fall on the mountain's side are not more swift and transient than were the lights and shadows of the history of France at the time that Catharine arrived there; to-day the festival, to-morrow the battle-field; the pæans of victory and the lamentations for defeat were sometimes almost blended together. The light on the Tour de la Fleur de Lys at Chambord to grace Catharine's arrival mingled with the lurid glare of burning villages. It was shortly after Catharine had traversed Provence that the order was given to turn that land of flowers, those vine-clad hills, those sunny, lovely vales where the orange and the myrtle grow wild, into a wilderness, and this merely

for a strategic purpose to check the advance of Charles. It was from Avignon, where Francis was encamped, that the merciless order was given, and too faithfully was it obeyed—the garden of Provence ceased to exist.

But for Francis there was a terrible retribution at hand. While he had gladly welcomed Catharine de Medicis as the wife of his second son, all his affections were centred on the Dauphin, and notwithstanding such cruel acts as the devastation of Provence, no one possessed deeper feelings than Francis, and the Dauphin was worthy of them. Suddenly, in addition to all his other anxieties, the King was informed that the Dauphin was ill at Lyons, and he was starting to see him when the Cardinal of Lorraine, the brother of the Duke of Guise, entered his room. Vainly did the Cardinal endeavour to compose his countenance; it betrayed the truth. "My son is dead!" exclaimed the King, and he burst into a flood of tears. We read how the unhappy Sovereign dragged himself to the window, and before the whole people, who loved him even in their depth of misery, raised

his eyes and hands to Heaven, and prayed for his son, for his people, for himself, "with the affection of a father, the firmness of a hero, and the piety of a Christian."

This sad event, which at once placed the Duke of Orleans on the first step of the throne, and made him Dauphin, was the first great sorrow of Catharine. Few deaths occurred in those days, whenever great interests were at stake, which were not attributed to poison; and the first question always asked was, who will benefit by the death? In this case there could be only one reply, Henry Duke of Orleans and Catharine his bride.

From this date arose all the suspicion with which Catharine was for the future to be regarded. Dark stories of the House of Medicis were put in circulation; and ignorantly credited. An Italian, Montecuculli, was seized and put to the torture. Among his papers was discovered an essay on poisons, some so colourless and tasteless that discovery seemed impossible. He confessed that he had been employed by Antoine de Sève and Ferdinand de Gonzargue,

at the instigation of Charles V., to poison the Dauphin, and at his execution he persisted in this declaration; but even this did not turn suspicion from Catharine. "Lorsqu'un homme désire d'être scandalisé tout lui sert;" and the multitude resemble individuals, when once an unfavourable impression exists, everything strengthens it. History assigns a less dramatic cause for the Dauphin's death. He had been playing at tennis, and drank cold water when overheated, and so brought on an attack of pleurisy.

Francis did not share the unfavourable opinion entertained of Catharine, for after the death of the Dauphin, he lavished every kindness upon her.* He sent for the Dauphin, and accord-

* Brantôme records the devotion of Francis for his daughter-in-law.

"Elle aymoit la chasse bien fort; sur quoi j'ai oüy faire le conte à une grande dame de la Cour d'alors: que ce Roy François ayant choisi et fait une troupe qui s'appellait 'la petite bande des dames de sa Cour, des plus belles, gentilles, souvent se dérobant de sa Cour, sen partait, et sen allait en autres maisons courir le cerf.' Madame la Dauphine voyant telles parties se faire sans elle, elle fit prière au Roy de la

ing to Mezeray, addressed him in touching words :—

"Mon fils, vous avez perdu un modèle, et moi un appui, le deuil universel justifie nos larmes et rend témoignage de la grandeur de votre perte, l'exemple de votre frère, leçon la plus utile à votre âge, vous eut guidé dans la carrière de l'honneur—maintenant que sa

mener toujour avec luy, et luy fist cet honneur de permettre qu'elle ne bougeast qu'avec luy.

" On dit qui estait fine et habille, le fut bien, d'autant pour voir les actions du Roy, et en tirer les secrets, et écouter et scavoir toutes choses, que pour la chasse.

" Le Roy François luy en scent si bon gré d'une telle prière, voyant la bonne volonté qui estait en elle d'aimer sa compagnie, qu'il luy accorda de très bon cœur, et outre qu'il l'aymoit naturellement, et l'en ayma toujours davantage, et se délectait à luy faire donner plaisir en la chasse, en laquelle elle n'abandonnait jamais le Roy, et le suivait toujours à courir, car elle estait fort bien à cheval et hardie; et s'y tenait de fort bonne grace. Ayant été la première qui avait mis la jambe sur l'arçon, c'était l'un de ses grands plaisirs à faire de grandes traittes, encore qu'elle en put tomber souvent au grand domage de son corps, car elle en fût blessée plusieurs fois, blessures de jambes, et blessures de teste, dont il l'en fallut trépaner."

mémoire vous inspire et vous conduisse. Héritier de son rang, soyez le de ses vertus naissantes, elles eussent fait ma joie, que les votres fassent ma consolation, imitez votre frère, surpassez le s'il est possible, vous ne me le ferez jamais oublier, faites m'en toujours souvenir."

The Court was present, and all were in tears, for the young Dauphin had been loved not more for his own merits than for the memory of his gentle, beautiful, and ever truthful mother, Madame Claude de France, and Francis possessed the universal sympathies of the people, while his Court was a home to all who frequented it, he called them his family, and no disappointment, no reverses, no sorrows could ever make him forget his affectionate interest in his friends. Not long after this sad event, his heart and hopes were again wounded by the death of his third son, the Duke of Orleans, for Henry, the present Dauphin, was the one he loved the least. A deep melancholy now settled on the King; he dreamed dreams, he saw visions; Henry VIII. of England died, and he felt his

own end was drawing near. "Mon ami est parti," he said, "mon tour ne tardera pas;" nor was it long delayed. He fell into a languid state, a low fever undermined his strength, and the chivalrous, high-spirited monarch, beloved by France, passed away.

Dark shadows had from time to time fallen on France during his reign of thirty-three years, but, compared with the succeeding reigns, it was brilliant and bright. During his youth he had introduced into the Court every fashion that tended to raise and elevate society; but much that adorned and beautified it was passing away, and "melting into thin air." The festal lights were burning out, the death of a king must ever be an epoch in a nation's history; in this instance it was an epoch of the deepest importance. Henceforth, for many years, the history of France is the history of Catharine de Medicis, of the greatness of the Guises, and the power of the Papacy.

Catharine was now Queen, and from this hour she was as an Italian subjected to the

most severe criticism; her whole life we are told was a life of dissimulation. "Elle parvint à se mettre à la tête d'un parti, par la souplesse de son esprit, et sa profonde dissimulation, caressant tous ceux qu'elle detestait, surtout la Grande Senéchale, flattant l'orgeuil du Connétable en lui demandant continuellement ses conseils, quoiqu'elle lui regardait comme son plus grand ennemi, ne se refusant de rien pourvu qu'elle achevait son but."

Yet we are told in the charming work of Reumont, entitled "La Jeunesse de Cathérine de Medicis," that she had a remarkably kind, gentle, and cordial manner; while yet only Dauphine one of her greatest interests was the welfare of those from whom she had parted in the Convent des Murates at Florence. Placed in that convent at a very early age, she was removed thence in 1580; when Catharine left, all its inmates were inconsolable; at first no persuasions could induce them to deliver the princess to the authorities sent to remove her, and force had to be threatened. When Catharine did

leave, she declared her intention of returning to the convent.

"Tell your master," she said to Sylvestro Aldobrandini, "if I were to do what I wish I would pass all my days here and become a nun myself."

Before this resistance, these tears and supplications Aldobrandini had to retire; but only to return the next day with more positive instructions, to which they were compelled to submit, and she was removed to the cloister of the Via San Gallo.

And of this convent, inhabited by these kind nuns, Catharine always cherished the most affectionate recollection. She was in constant correspondence with the abbess, and entered into every detail of her life; she recommended herself to their prayers, she loved to recall the daily life of the convent, the beautiful gardens so rich in flowers and fruit, at the foot of which the Arno flowed—all the poetry of her Italian nature was poured forth in these letters. She dwelt lovingly on the prospects of the rich and varied country round Florence.

"Monti superbi la cui fronte Alpina,
Fa di se contro i venti argine e sponda,
Valle beati per cui d' onda in onda,
L'Arno con passo signoril cammina."

it seemed as though all her heart was centred in Italy.

She begs them to offer up daily prayers for her; as Dauphiness she had promised to be a benefactress to the convent, and to render it all possible service, and as Queen, one of her first acts was to bestow on it a rich grant of land. She addresses them in the most affectionate terms.*

"De par la Royne,

"Chères et bien aimées, nous avons reçeue par Messer Nicole de Medicis présent porteur les lettres que vous avez escriptes et entendu par lui ce qu'il nous a diet de votre part, mêsmes la volonté en laquelle vous persévérez ordinairement de pryer Dieu pour la prospérité du Roy Monseigneur, de nous et de noz enffans, vous prians bien fort de vouloir continuer estans

* Appendix I.

assurés que vous les recognoistrons vers vous, nous lui avons donné charge de vous dire de notre part quelques choses, vous nous ferez bien grand et singullier plaisir de le voulloir entendre, et croyre pour estre hommes de foy et créance, assurés comme vous mesmes le cognaissez de bonne et entière suffisance, et a tant chères et bien aimées nous prions Dieu vous avoir en sa saincte et digne garde. Donné à Lyon le premier jour d'Octobre, 1543. CATARINE."

It seems almost incredible that the following letter should have been written the year after the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

"Madame delle Murates, j'ay reçeu les lettres que vous m'avez escristes, qui m'ont été fort agréables tant pour avoir entendu par elles de vos bonnes nouvelles et de tout votre monastère, que pour la bonne souvenance que vous avez de moy en vos bonnes prières et oraisons, desquelles je m'assure pour estre continuelles et assidues faictes par vous de bonne et dévote affection ne peuvent faillir d'estre agréables à nostre seigneur. Je vous prie de continuer

toujours et vous souvenir de moi, et de tous mes enfans en vostres oraisons, affin que tout ainsi que en mes jeunes ans j'ay vos bonnes intercessions et prières estre conservée en la grace de Dieu lequel je prie vous tenir en sa saincte garde. Escript à Paris le 22 jour de Septembre, 1573.

"CATHARINE."

So late even as 1583 this correspondence is carried on, and it is difficult to reconcile this tenderness and considerate kindness with the terrible scenes of the Queen's eventful life.

All the historians of the time agree that the Queen's was a character most difficult to understand; we read that she possessed all the cunning of her race and country, that her life was one prolonged effort of ambition. Her apologists add that she was not cruel from a love of cruelty, or generous from a love of excellence; her virtues and vices depended on the necessities of her position. If she traversed dark and gloomy crimes, she did so as generals traverse mountains and valleys because they find them in their way.

But in truth, Catharine de Medicis cannot be

judged by her calumniators or her panygyrists, hers was a great spirit antithetically mixed with passions carried to excess on whichever side they were enlisted; in these days it is difficult to realize the earnestness and consequently the violence which creeds and parties called forth; it was not only in France that three centuries since the pages of history were stained with blood, that the value set on life was far different from what it is now. Men's lives were always in their hands; the sanctity of human life and its preservation is the first evidence of an advanced civilization.

If we turn to Brantôme, he expatiates in glowing terms on the high qualities of the Queen. He says that as Queen of France, and doing the honours of the Court, she was most brilliant and magnificent; nothing ever equalled her, and he speaks as forming one of that Court. If it be true "que la voix est la fleur de la beauté," she possessed that gift in perfection; still quoting Brantôme, "She was very handsome, tall, majestic, of a winning presence, always surrounded by a numerous court of the first ladies of the kingdom, she enjoyed the diversions of fishing and hunting,

and in the evening, work, dancing, and conversation were the occupations of the circle.

She loved and protected all arts, and her Court was attended by the most eminent masters, not only of the Italian but of all foreign schools. Foreigners, as well as the French, were surprised on visiting the Court to find themselves distinguished for their actions or their works; she undertook the charge of presenting to Henry and to her sons the gentlemen who sought her protection, and she did this with that appearance of deep interest which wins confidence and removes timidity; briefly her Court was free, gay, joyous, amidst all the dangers and sombre hues of factions and fanaticism.

And yet at the death of Francis I. the Court of France lost that nameless grace, that grace so difficult of attainment, which made it the centre to which all eyes were turned. The dignified charm of the French character seemed to decline with him, there was the same magnificence and love of display, but the tone of women, and of men towards women, greatly changed; the generous qualities of Francis had won all

hearts and weakened the violence of parties. Henry was far inferior in all high qualities to his father, and his sons again were far inferior to him.

And thus the prestige of the Court of the Louvre declined; but even in its decline it attracted to it lovers of pleasure, of art, of poetry, and song, the graceful verses of Marguerite de Valois were widely appreciated; Clément Marot appealed to the chivalry of the age, Ronsard followed in the same strain. At the christening of the latter we are gracefully told,

"Une damoiselle tenait à la main un vase plein d'eau de rose, et le renversa sur la tête de l'enfant, c'était, dit Claude Bénit, un présage des bonnes odeurs, dont il devait remplir toute la France des fleurs de son esprit."

Ambitions stimulate ambitions, and now rose in all its splendour the illustrious House of Guise. France in her day has possessed many illustrious commanders, but few have ever equalled Francis, Duke of Guise, the defender of Metz, and the conqueror of Calais.

The defence of Metz will ever be considered one of the most striking events in the history of France. When the Duke of Guise entered the town, all its defences, its walls, bastions, and ramparts, were in a most ruinous state. Metz itself being commanded by an amphitheatre of hills, the troops had lost all energy, and blank despair was depicted on every countenance; but through the genius of a young and chivalrous captain (the Duke was then just thirty), the whole circumstances were immediately changed. Our own great historian has described in glowing language the qualities which rendered the Duke of Guise beloved by all.

"Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, possessed in a high degree all the talents of courage, sagacity, and presence of mind which render men eminent in military command, he was largely endowed with that magnanimity of soul which delights in bold enterprises and aspires to fame by splendid and extraordinary actions; he repaired with joy to the dangerous station assigned him, as to a theatre on which he might display his great qualities under the immediate

eye of his countrymen, all ready to applaud him; the martial genius of the French nobility, in that age which considered it the greatest reproach to remain inactive when there was any opportunity of signalising their courage, prompted great numbers to follow a leader who was the darling, as well as the pattern of everyone who courted military fame. Several princes of the blood, many noblemen of the highest rank, and all the young officers who could obtain the King's permission entered Metz as volunteers."*

"He found everything on his arrival there in such a situation as might have induced any person of less intrepid courage to despair of defending it with success. . . . He pulled down such houses as stood near the walls, cleared and enlarged the ditch, repaired the various fortifications, and erected new ones. As it was necessary that all these works should be executed with the utmost expedition, he laboured at them with his own hands, the officers and volunteers imitated his example, and his soldiers submitted

* Robertson's "Charles V." vol. v, page 247.

cheerfully to the most severe and fatiguing service, when they saw that their superiors did not dccline to take a part in it. Such were his popular talents as well as his arts of acquiring an ascendant over the minds of them, that the citizens revered him with no less ardour than the soldiers."

After a siege of fifty-six days, during which the Emperor lost no less than thirty thousand men, Charles V. resolved to raise the siege.

"Fortune," said the Emperor, "I now perceive resembles other females, and chooses to confer her favours on young men, while she turns her back on those that are advanced in years."

Such was the confusion of the retreat that the French might have harassed them in the most cruel manner. The Imperial camp was full of dead and dying, the roads were blocked with the sick and wounded, but all the kindest offices that could be shown to friends and allies were by the Duke bestowed on his foes. Those who could be moved were carried to the nearest villages and attended to by French surgeons. As soon

as they recovered he sent them home under an escort of soldiers, with money to bear their charges. It was by acts like these that the name of Guise became so beloved throughout France, and the House of Lorraine so powerful. In these days of cruel warfare it is pleasant to record chivalrous deeds. The example of the Duke was followed by the other generals. Charles de Bourbon, Prince de la Rôche-sur-Yon, and nephew of the famous Constable, pursued a body of the Imperial cavalry, and not a man would have escaped, when the Spanish commander exclaimed,

"Brave Français, si vous combattez pour la gloire, cherchez une autre occasion, aujourd'hui vous engagez des hommes hors d'état de vous résister, et trop faibles pour prendre la fuite."

The Prince responded to the appeal, the men, reduced to mere shadows, were carefully attended to and all their wants supplied.

The glory of Guise culminated in the capture of Calais, after it had been for more than two hundred years in the possession of England. It was the only place England retained of her

cheerfully to the most severe and fatiguing service, when they saw that their superiors did not decline to take a part in it. Such were his popular talents as well as his arts of acquiring an ascendant over the minds of them, that the citizens revered him with no less ardour than the soldiers."

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Powerful and ambitious, the Duke of Guise was in many respects most distasteful to Catharine, who resented his great influence and popularity, and the authority of the Guises in the Council, from which she in vain endeavoured to release herself. After the death of Henry II. in 1559, killed by Montgommery in a tournament, she found her position very difficult On the one hand the Guises were at the head of the Catholic party, which possessed all her sympathies—the more so as she attributed her husband's death to a plot of the Calvinists, who in the poems of the time spoke of the whole Medicis family as the enemies of Christ.

> " Dieu déployant sur lui sa vengeance sévère,
> Marqua ce Roi mourant du sceau de sa colère."

But on the other hand, she dreaded the great talents and power of the House of Lorraine, which, apart from its eminent merit, was a family so strong in itself. There were six brothers, François Duke of Guise, the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Duke d'Aumale, the Cardinal of

Guise, the Marquis d'Elbœuf, and the Grand Prior. But Catharine so far concealed her feelings of mistrust as to create the Duke, soon after the death of Henry, Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, with most extensive powers.

A short time subsequent to this appointment, he undertook the siege of Orleans, when he was shot by Poltrot, at the instigation of the eldest of the Châtillons. Our sympathy with the Huguenots is greatly diminished when we find them guilty of such base and cowardly crimes. The Calvinists denied their complicity in this foul murder; but the following verses in the "Chansonnier Huguenot" prove the assassination, and the spirit in which it was committed; the song is headed, "Chant de Guerre, chanté à Poltrot avec son anniversaire de la delivérance la troisième.

"Allons, jeunes et vieux
Revisitez le lieu,
Auquel ce furieux*

* The Duke de Guise.

Fût attrappé de Dieu.
Attrappé au milieu
Des gens de son armée,
Dont fût esteint le feu
De la guerre allumée.

" Quel homme tant heureux,
Dieu choisit pour cela,
Quel soldat généreux
Dedans son camp alla.
Tant se dissimula,
Que l'occasion prise,
Il exécuta là
Sa divine entreprise.

" Ce fust cest Angoulmois,
Cest unique Poltrot,
(Nostre parler Françoys
N'a pas un plus beau mot).
Par qui *tomba le lot*,
De retirer d'oppresse,
Le peuple Huguenot
De sa plus grande détresse.

" Devant l'embrasement
De ce civil erreur,*
Il avait bravement,

* De la guerre civile.

Résolu dans son cœur.
Que le plus grand honneur
Que l'homme peust acquerre,
Seroit d'oster l'auteur
Et chef de cette guerre.

The Duke having boasted that he would take Orleans in three days—

" Il prist si vistement,
Nostre port et nos tours,
Qu'il dist avecq serment
Qu'il verroit dans trois jours.
Nous estant sans secours,
Et près de sa sécousse,
Si Dieu notre recours
Viendroit à la recousse.

" Quand Poltrot l'entendit,
Aussi horriblement
Blasphémer, il a dit,
—Je voiy ton jugement.
Mon Dieu, sur ce méchant,
Si mon dessein t'agrée,
Donne moy, Dieu puissant,
Ta courtance assurée.

" Aussitôt dit, il part,
Il s'enquiert, il entend,

Où est, de quelle part
Vient celui qu'il attend,
Cependant choisissant
Lieu pour son advantage,
Le recoignoist passant,
Et le tourne au passage.

" Voyez quel est l'estat
De nos pauvres humains,
Celuy qui en ses mains
Espérait veoir les fins
De l'Europe envâyie.
Dieu trompe ses desseins,
Et lui oste la vie.

" Qui fit finir le temps
De nos jours malheureux,
Dont est dit tous les ans
Poltron payant nos vœux.
L'exemple merveilleux
D'une extrême vaillance,
Le dixième des preux
Libérateur de France."*

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* There was another very quaint song on the same subject:

" Poltrot de Meré."

Chanté à l'anniversaire de sa mort.

Never was verse so full of extraordinary fanaticism. Here is the most atrocious murder exalted into a religious act. We learn that the murderer is chosen by lot; Heaven is invoked in aid; and finally, that Poltrot was not the only one who had committed a similar crime. Certainly, if murder is to be boasted of, a greater man and nobler leader had never been struck down. The wound given by Poltrot was deep, and as the doctors at once detected the dagger was a poisoned one, no hope remained. The Duke of Guise, in this supreme hour, was great as ever.

"He spoke of death as something it was meet
In honour's arms exultingly to greet
A closing triumph, a concluding scene,
Where weeping thousands watched the hero's mien.
While undismayed, and in the face of all,
He folds his mantle manfully to fall."

No captain had ever died in France with greater glory, or left a nobler name in the history of his country.

The warfare was entirely suspended, while Calvinists as well as Catholics gazed on the

closing scene of this grand life. On the Duke's part there was no weakness, no regret; he was brave, noble, and generous. He summoned to his side Anne d'Este, his wife, and Henry, his son, the future victim of the tragedy of Blois. With the tenderest accents love could suggest, he urged the mother to be a guide to his son, as he already saw the germs of that ambition that was to lead to so sad an end. He besought him to moderate his desires, to forgive his enemies, but to mistrust all the favours of the Court. He then turned his thoughts to religion, and asked for the Last Sacraments. He did nothing common or mean; noble to the end, his last words were words of consolation to those weeping around him. Leboureur writes his epitaph in these words:—"Francis, Duke of Guise, who loved the Church and State."

CHAPTER IV.

THE religious wars continued to rage over France. Nor was the warfare that was carried on by either side worthy of the great names of those who led the respective armies, or of the great principles which each party professed. Conspiracy led to conspiracy, assassination to assassination, treachery to treachery. If the Huguenots, in 1567 nearly seized the King and Queen-Mother at the Château of Monceau in Brie, by a treacherous plot, in 1569, the Prince of Condé was killed in cold blood by the Captain of the Duke of Anjou's Guard, after the battle of Jarnac, when he had surrendered himself as prisoner. It was on battle-fields that Henry, Duke of Guise,

showed how fully he inherited the great qualities of his father, and he seemed destined to win the same warm affections of the people. The Huguenots invested Poitiers, as Charles V. had invested Metz, so gallantly defended by Francis, Duke of Guise. The son, emulous of his father's example, threw himself into the town, and by his spirit and influence compelled Coligny to raise the siege after the loss of three thousand men. But now the darkest day of France was at hand; in the massacre of St. Bartholomew the evil passions of religious hatred culminated. The admirers of the Duke of Guise deny his part in this monstrous butchery; but no one has ever ventured to question the participation in it of the Queen-Mother and Charles IX. Fénélon, the French Ambassador, describes the effect it produced at the English Court.

"A gloomy sorrow," says he, "sat on every face; silence, as in the dead of night, reigned through all the chambers of the Royal Palace. The ladies and courtiers, clad in deep mourning, were ranged on each side, and as I passed by

them, not one bestowed on me a favourable look, or made the least return to my salutation."*

* The historian Mathieu, much exonerates the King, and attributes the massacre to the Queen-Mother. He relates a conversation between Henry III., then Duke of Anjou, and his physician, Mison. "The Duke going, some days before the massacre, into the chamber of the King, his brother observed that the King looked upon him with eyes so full of rage, and such indications of fury in his air, (at the news of the attempt against Coligny), that apprehending the consequences of these violent emotions, he softly regained the door, and hurried to the Queen-Mother; she, from what had happened to herself being too much disposed to believe it, resolved to get rid of Coligni without further delay. Maurevert having partly failed in his attempt, since he only wounded the Admiral in the arm, the Queen-Mother, and the Duke of Anjou, finding they could not hinder the King from visiting him, thought it necessary to accompany him; and, under the pretence of sparing the Admiral's strength, interrupted as often as they could the private conversations they had together. During the visit Catharine, who was surrounded by Calvinists, observed that they frequently whispered to each other, and looked on her from time to time, with very suspicious eyes. This adventure she acknowledged was the most dangerous of all she had ever been engaged in. She pressed the King so vehemently to tell her the subject of his private discourse, that the Prince could

Sully, in his "Mémoires," written by himself, says that the conduct of Catharine and Charles previous to the terrible massacre was a prodigy of dissimulation.

"Nothing could be kinder than the reception the Queen of Navarre, her children, and principal servants met with from the King and the Queen-Mother, or more obliging than their treatment of all their Court; Charles IX. constantly praising the virtues and good qualities

not hinder himself from betraying it, by telling her, with his usual oath, that she spoiled all his affairs, or some words to that purpose. Catharine, now more alarmed than before, had recourse to an artifice that succeeded. She told her son that he was ready to fall into the snare the Admiral had laid for him, that he was on the point of being delivered up to the Huguenots, and that he had nothing to expect from his Catholic subjects who, disgusted at finding themselves betrayed, had chosen another leader. All the other councillors, excepting only the Maréchal de Retz, seconded her arguments so strongly that Charles himself, being seized with fear, and passing from one extreme to the other, was the first to resolve on the murder, not only of the Admiral, but of the Huguenots, 'to the end that there may not be one left to reproach us.' The rest of the day and the following night they consulted on the means of executing their design."

of the Counts de la Rochefoucauld, de Grammont, de Nevers, Bouchavannes, and the other Protestant lords. The Admiral he always styled my Father, and took upon himself the task of reconciling him with the Princes of the House of Guise. When the Admiral was shot in the arm by Maurevel, the King burst forth into oaths and threatenings, and declared that the assassin should be sought for in the most secret recesses of the Palace of the Guises. He made all the Court, after his example; visit the wounded man. It was marvellous how a man of Coligny's great wisdom could have fallen into the snare, notwithstanding a thousand circumstances which might have led him to apprehend the danger that was approaching."

After the massacre, there was speedy retribution for Charles.

Sully says "that from the evening of the 24th of August, he was observed to groan involuntarily at the recital of a thousand strokes of cruelty, which everyone boasted of in his presence. Of all those who were about the person of the Prince, none possessed so

great a share of his confidence as Ambrose Paré, his surgeon. This man, though a Huguenot, lived with him in so great a degree of familiarity that, on the day of the massacre, Charles telling him the time was now come when the whole kingdom would be Catholic, he replied, without being alarmed, 'By the light of God, Sire, I cannot believe that you have forgot your promise never to command me to do three things, namely, to be present on the day of battle, to quit your service, or to go to mass.' The King soon after called him aside, and said, 'Ambrose, I know not what has happened to me these three or four days past; but I feel my mind and body as much at enmity with each other as if I were seized with a fever; sleeping or waking, the murdered Huguenots are ever present to my eyes, with ghastly faces, and weltering in blood. I wish the innocent and helpless had been spared.' The order which was published the following day, forbidding the continuance of the massacre, was the result of this conversation."

Whatever the effect of the massacre on

the public opinion of Europe, and of the conduct of the Queen-Mother, it decidedly strengthened the House of Guise.* The vacillating conduct of Charles, even when he was steeped in blood for the Catholic cause, failed to win the Catholic party, and that party was never more powerful than when Henry III. succeeded to the melancholy inheritance of Charles IX. The whole country was desolated by the Civil Wars, and unbridled license prevailed throughout the length and breadth of the land; and yet all this

* What part the Duke de Guise had in the massacre has always been questioned; there can be no doubt, that as far as the Admiral de Coligny was concerned, it must he brought home to the Guises. "The whole House of Guise," says Sully, "had been personally animated against the Admiral ever since the assassination of the Duke by Poltrot de Meré, whom they believed to have been instigated to this crime by him; and it must be admitted the Admiral was never able to clear himself of this imputation. If this cruel slaughter, as many people are fully persuaded, was only an effect of the Guises' resentement, who advised the Queen-Mother to it with a view of revenging their own injuries, it must be confessed that no person ever exacted so severe a vengeance for an offence."—*Sully*, v. 1, p. 526.

time, although so greatly fallen from its high estate, Paris was the city in which all the young nobles of other countries congregated, and where a wild gaiety was carried to excess. Accomplishments were learned there, to shoot with a pistol, to leap the barrier, and, above all, to poniard a foe, the latter being considered the most important. Murders, slaughterings, and burnings were the ordinary topics of conversation; and whoever had committed the greatest number of crimes was held in the highest esteem. Gallantry and gracefulness had degenerated into coarseness, recklessness, and all the wildest excesses of passion. Even affections were esteemed in proportion to the extravagance and eccentricity of their expression. Henry III., when Duke of Anjou, writing from Poland to the beautiful Réné de Rieux-Châteauneuf, writes to her with his blood. Ferocity took the place of sentiment. The King, surrounded by the young courtiers, at times rushed through the streets in the most reckless manner, armed with swords and

daggers, alarming all who came in their way, nor was this strange life considered inconsistent with religion and devotion; the highest and the lowest ideas, the noblest and most ignoble lives, were thus blended together.

One product of the fertile Italian brain of Catharine was the introduction of the belief in magic and sorcery, and with the attendant circumstances of poisonings and assassinations, the principle of the period was that "the end justifies the means." Astrologers and professors of magic were brought into fashion, philtres were sold which professed to command the affections; and charms to be employed for purposes of revenge. The unfortunate Malé expiated on the scaffold, what was construed into an attempt on the life of Charles IX.—a wax figure having been found in his possession melting before a slow fire, with a pin thrust through the heart. The most famous of all these astrologers was Cosmo Ruggieri, a Florentine, who had also the repu-

tation of being the most skilful poisoner, and was openly protected by the Queen-Mother.*

At this time everyone lived in dread of attempts on their lives; assassinations were of daily occurrence, and no time or place was respected. Villequier, a favourite of Henry III., stabbed his wife, with his own hand, in the Louvre in a fit of jealousy. From the same cause, Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf killed (and Brantôme, who recounts the deed, uses the word "courageously") the Florentine Antinotti, who had consented to marry her; but whom, in spite of his promise, she had some reason to mistrust.

When cruelty and ferocity were the charac-

* When the Queen of Navarre died, Catharine was universally believed to have poisoned her. In the Memoirs of Etoile and d'Aubigné, they assert that the poison was given her in a pair of gloves by a Florentine, named René, perfumer to the Queen. De Senes says, "that the physician who opened the body had orders not to touch the brain, which was supposed to be affected by the poison." De Thou endeavours to remove all suspicion of poison, and says "that Charles IX. ordered the brain to be examined as well as the body."

teristics of the time, pity for sufferings was rarely evinced. This is why Francis and Henry, Dukes of Guise, won so greatly on the hearts of the people, because they were exceptions to the general indifference shown by the nobility for their miseries. Even the most beautiful of the Court were not free from the suspicion of terrible crimes, and it was believed that they found in their own circle of admirers willing instruments of deeds of blood. It is stated alike of Charles IX. and Henry III. that they were frequently present at scenes of torture, and derived a barbarous delight from witnessing the pain they inflicted.

D'Aubigné states, "that travelling one day with Charles de la Tremouille, he observed that he changed colour as he passed by bodies suspended from gibbets. He took him by the hand, and said, 'Learn to contemplate these objects in a life so uncertain as our own, it is well to become familiarised with death.'"

And yet, in these days of contrasts, there were instances of noble lives and generous

self-devotion. "There are hearts which, like chapels in palaces, remain unprofaned, even if all the rest is tyranny, corruption, and folly." Although so much of the grace, tenderness, and sweetness of life had deserted the Court, the love of poetry, song, and music was still cultivated in the royal circle. It is difficult to realize that Charles IX. loved the Fine Arts, and even excelled in them; that hands stained with blood could pen sonnets, and the same low voice utter vows of love, or the doom of the lover. The Calvinist party especially mourned their sorrows in eloquent and poetic language; some of their melodies are very beautiful, full of a touching melancholy. Verse and song have ever been the best interpreters of the feelings of an afflicted people.

One which was much sung at this time, was a "Cantique sur le Massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy, par Etienne de Maisonfleur, gentilhomme Huguenot, 1572, le 30 Aoust." There is a deep pathos in its expression.

"Toutes nos voix faites plaintes,
Toutes nos lampes esteintes,

Tous nos temples desmolis,
Nos églises dissipées,
Nos unions destiées.
Et nos presches abolis.

" Toutes nos maisons volées,
Toutes nos lois violées,
Tous nos hostels abattus,
Tous nos livres mis en cendres,
Tous nos cœurs prests à se rendre,
Tous nos esprits combattus.

" Nostre couronne tombée,
Nostre joye desrobée,
Nostre or obscur devenu,
Nostre argent meslé d'escume
Nostre bien plein d'amertume,
Nostre bon droit retenu.

" Parmi tant d'aspres souffrances,
A tes divines vengeances,
Nous avons recours, Seigneur,
Las ! voudrez-tu bien permettre
Tant de meurtres se commettre,
Aux dépens de ton honneur.

" Leurs cruautéz excessives,
Ont bordé toutes les rives

Des corps morts de tes esteur,
Et leurs lâmes criminelles,
Dans le sang de tes fidèles,
Ont tous leurs tranchants pollus.

" Alors comme bestes brutes,
Nous faisons servir de butes
A leurs despits inhumains,
En mille sortes honteuses,
Sur tes âmes précieuses,
Ils ont estendu leurs mains.

" Par sang, par feu, par carnage,
Par feu, par meutre, par rage,
Dans la fureur transportez,
D'un esprit démoniacle,
Saccageant ton tabernacle,
Ils ont tes biens emportez.

" De l'air se nourrit le monde,
Le peuple escaillé de l'onde,
Et la mouche à miel de fleurs,
Le beau printemps de verdure,
Les animeaux de pasteurs,
Et l'homme affligé de pleurs.

" Puisque les tyrans de France,
Dans le sang de l'innocence

Vont leurs mains ensanglantans,
C'est un indice extrême
Qu'il leur en prendra de mesme,
Avant qu'il soit peu de temps.

"Fleuve de Seine qui mouilles
Les précieuses despouilles,
De tant d'espritz bien heureux,
Donneras tu point sentence,
Au grand jour de la vengeance
Contre tant de malheureux.

"Quant à moy, je prophétise
Que le chef de nostre Eglise,
Qui fait au ciel son séjour,
Si nous avons patience,
Nous en fera la vengeance
Avant qu'il soit an et jour."

From the accession of Henry III. until the formation of the famous League in 1577, the weak and contemptible character of the King became more and more manifest. He was one of those natures least fitted to rule, unstable in all his ways, religion and iniquity mingled in his incongruous character; as has been remarked, he could pass from the most frightful riotings to

abject forms of superstitious worship, and even the astute counsels and deep policy of the Queen-Mother could not arrest the consequences of his wild excesses and eccentricities.

In 1577 the real struggle was to commence between the two Henrys, Henry, King of France, and Henry, Duke of Guise. Henry III. possessing all the power and authority of royalty, with the prestige which hedges kings, and which even all the manifest weaknesses, follies, and vices of the sovereign failed to destroy, for it seemed impossible entirely to alienate the monarchical feeling in France. Henry, Duke of Guise, was in the full vigour of his age and maturity of his intellect, impetuous, resolute, and daring, it was the languid turbid stream opposed to the foaming dashing torrent. The Duke was invited to place himself at the head of the League, but with all his courage, and even audacity, he possessed the quality of prudence, and knew how much may be achieved by playing a secondary part.

Tel brille au second rang qui s'éclipse au premier.

He was at that time most anxious to keep on

good terms with the King; it was by no means clear that the nation was ripe for any overt act of rebellion; he could not forget that he was a Prince of the Blood of France, and he expressed his sense of the danger of a false move when he replied to those who urged him to action, "I must not draw my sword unless I throw away the scabbard." But ambition ultimately conquered all his scruples and hesitations, and he became the acknowledged head of the famous League.

The Duke of Guise concentrated in his own person at this time those qualities which rendered the princes of the House of Lorraine so dear to the people. He inherited the grace and dignity of his father—tall, with regular features and a majestic deportment, a look to win a woman's heart, but piercing and stern to defy any enemy. He added to these exterior advantages a courage that nothing could daunt, and the rare power of getting his fame widely spread about, under the assumption of a modesty as though he did not desire his good deeds to be known. He possessed in its fulness the spirit of command, and combined the greatest discretion under an

appearance of even rash frankness, and he had the art of persuading men that his energies were still undeveloped at the time that he was really putting forth all his strength. Moreover, he possessed the faculty of making the people believe that his faithful service to the Catholic cause was for the glory of God, and not for his own personal ambition—in a word, to quote the expression of that day, "La France était folle de cet homme, car c'est trop peu de dire amoureux."

How could a vacillating, weak monarch, with feelings variable as the wind, influenced by every opinion, at one moment that of the Queen-Mother, and then of anyone of his vicious favourites, hope to resist a power like the League, headed by such a captain as Henry of Guise? The King felt he had no force to combat with such a party, and that he must seek his weapons of defence in intrigue and cunning; hence followed a succession of negotiations, at one time with Philip of Spain, then with the Calvinists, then with the League, until all faith in him was lost. Catharine wisely

advocated a decided uncompromising policy, and upbraided the King with want of energy. The Queen-Mother was conscious of the greatness of his danger; his own friends ceased to have any confidence in him, and the cause of monarchy was daily losing ground: in the conspiracy of what was called Le Conseil de Seize, because it was headed by the leader of the sixteen quarters into which Paris was divided, it was intended to attack the Louvre, seize the King, and massacre all the Court; the plot was betrayed by Poulain, a secret agent of the police. The King had just time to reinforce his guard with four thousand Swiss, when the Duke of Guise, who was on his march to Paris, to assist the conspirators, stopped at Soissons.

This was a supreme moment, the first great crisis of his life; the King sent the most distinct, imperative orders that the Duke should not move nearer Paris. Up to this time, although at the head of the League, the Duke had maintained the semblance of deference to the Royal authority. Conspiracies and plots succeeded each other, but outwardly Henry's

supremacy was duly recognised; to advance to Paris with an armed force, in opposition to the distinct commands of his Sovereign, was to commit an overt act of treason, and the Duke hesitated; but his hesitation was not of long duration, his principle was to decide at once.

"If I could not," he used to say, "make up my mind in a quarter of an hour I should never do it during my whole life."

Almost for the first time in his public life he resolved on a compromise; he would disobey the Royal command, and enter Paris, but unaccompanied by any of his guards; it was a bold resolution, for he was committing a distinct act of treason, and at the same time without any of those precautions which could ensure his safety. The Duke, however, confided in the feelings of the populace, and trusted too much to the King's weakness of character, which over-confidence was the ultimate cause of his death. On this occasion, however, the result justified his faith in his great popularity; he entered Paris by the route St. Denis with only seven followers. Davila, who was an eye-

witness of the scene, describes "the crowd which collected and increased like a snowball; at last there were not less than twenty thousand people following him; they all seemed wild with joy, instead of 'Vive le Roi,' the cry was 'Vive Guise.' The demonstrations of affection and devotion could not be exceeded; some people blessed him as the deliverer and saviour of his country; those who were unable to approach near, stretched their hands towards him in a supplicating attitude, as though he were a divinity; some knelt as he passed, others kissed the trappings of his horse, chaplets were thrust forward for him to touch, and then were pressed to the eyes and heart. Flowers were showered upon his path. The Duke, tranquil and serene, spoke most graceful and gracious words to all who were near him; he waved his hand to the ladies who smiled upon him from the windows. He managed his horse with the grace of an accomplished cavalier, while with plumed hat in hand he bowed low to the animated crowd."

With this cortège, more flattering than any

prepared triumph, the Duke descended at the Hôtel de Soissons, near the church St. Eustache; he then went at once to visit the Queen-Mother, to propitiate her and to explain his reasons for not obeying the King's commands. Catharine had heard of his triumphal progress, and as the shouts of the populace became louder and louder, she changed colour, and was seized with a trembling which everyone remarked. The Duke was now on foot, and could with difficulty force a way through the dense crowd of his devoted adherents. Catharine recovered her dignity and composure when the Duke entered and made a low obeisance to her; the Queen-Mother at once expressed her regret that he had, after the King's distinct orders, come to the capital. The Duke replied that his conduct, he understood, had been misrepresented to the King, and his character grossly maligned. His object in coming to Paris was to justify himself to His Majesty, than whom the King possessed no more devoted servant. Then, changing the conversation, he addressed himself to the ladies of the Court in courteous and complimentary

terms. Meanwhile Catharine sent Davila to the King to say that the Duke was with her, and she would accompany him to the Louvre.

When the King's reply arrived the cortége left the Tuileries. Catharine was carried in a sedan-chair, the Duke walked by her side, and conversed with her in a free and unconcerned manner, while he acknowledged the acclamations of the crowd, who rent the air with shouts of "Vive Guise." It was not, however, without anxiety that at the gates of the Louvre he found all the guards doubled, while the inner court was full of the Swiss Body-Guard in marching order; the archers could be seen at every window and lining all the passages. The crowd who followed Guise was kept back from entering the court, and the Duke was only accompanied by the seven devoted followers who had entered Paris with him. As Catharine and Guise passed along, they found the galleries and all the ante-rooms crowded with courtiers, who returned the Duke's salute with a constrained and formal manner; there was a deathlike stillness, an ominous silence when Catharine entered the

presence chamber, and the door was closed. A tremor passed over the Duke, and not without cause; at that moment his fate, his life or death, was being debated.

"Strike the shepherd and the flock will disappear," said one of the council. Catharine urged with all the vigour of her nature the same decided course; but even as they debated the shouts of "Vive Guise" were heard in the distance, and these shouts of defiance, which would have produced the effect of arousing some natures, only alarmed the King. The council could come to no decision, and the Duke was summoned. As soon as he entered the King said,

"I ordered you not to come to Paris, do you disobey my authority?"

"My desire," replied the Duke, "was to justify myself to Your Majesty; moreover the order was not distinctly given me."

The King turned to Bellièvre who took it, and a discussion arose, in the midst of which Guise made a low obeisance and retired, and before the King had recovered from his surprise the

Duke had passed through the gallery, the favourable moment for arresting the chief of the League was lost, and the Duke was in the midst of his followers and friends.*

The next day the city was in an uproar. On the previous evening the Swiss troops had been very unwisely distributed through the different quarters, and the detachments were cut off from each other. The population rose, and instigated by the League fortified themselves in the streets, repulsed and disarmed the Swiss, defeated the royal guards, and carried the barricades within a hundred yards of the Louvre. The King was

* D'Aubigné says, "The Duke of Guise wasted six whole days at Soissons, not daring to come to Paris, contrary to the King's orders, which were signified to him by Bellièvre, in two letters which were sent him at different times by the post." "The King was to blame," as Mathieu says, "for not sending these letters by an express to the Duke of Guise, for the Duke imagined that he might elude this order by denying that he had received these letters; as in effect he did at the Palace in presence of the Queen and Bellièvre, to whom he protested that they were never delivered to him; the fault was not committed through negligence, but because the King had not twenty-five crowns to spare to pay the courier for his journey."

in the utmost alarm. He was forced to condescend to send for the Duke, who entered the presence chamber with a very different attitude from that of the previous day. At the earnest entreaties of the King he went out to appease the tumult, the barricades all fell before him; he thanked the people, addressing them in his free, frank, familiar manner, the royal troops all saluted and appealed to him for protection, and he ordered the people to open a way for them to the Louvre. They marched without beat of drum and with reversed arms, happy to escape from the fury of the populace.

The Duke thought the time had now arrived when he could with safety make known the extent of his demands and expectations. He insisted on being named Lieutenant-General of France, with the command of all the royal troops, and this command to be confirmed by the States-General to be convened at once for this purpose; ten of the strongest places in France were to be given him as a security, and the crown to pay for their armament. He demanded the Government of Paris for the Count de Brissac, one of

his most most trusty followers, and the government of Picardy, Normandy, and Lyons for three others of his devoted adherents—the King was never to have near him more than a small guard officered by the Duke.

These demands were so preposterous that it was not possible that they could be accepted. If granted, the King became at once a mere puppet, and yet in the actual position of affairs it was absolutely necessary to gain time to enable him to escape from Paris. Guise was concentrating the forces of the League round the palace, and it would soon be too late. The King went through the form of summoning his council to consider these propositions of the Duke, and the night was passed in deliberation.

The next morning the Queen-Mother left the Tuileries to visit the Duke. It was a great fatigue for her to pass from one street to another, because the Leaguers refused to assist in the removal of the remaining barricades, and her chair had in many instances to be lifted over them. In one place as she was being assisted across, one of the men, under the pretext of assisting, drew

near and whispered to her that fifteen thousand men were preparing to invest the Louvre and prevent the King leaving Paris; she sent one of her gentlemen with this information to the King, and then continued her progress.

The Queen found the Duke awaiting her arrival, and they at once commenced to discuss his demands. He did not seem disposed to give way on any point, and the Queen urged with justice that to grant them would be to abdicate the throne. The discussion became more and more animated. The Queen prolonged it as much as possible, and two hours elapsed without arriving at any conclusion. Suddenly the Seigneur de Menneville was announced, with the important communication that the King had left Paris. The Duke started at this intelligence.

"You intend, then, to kill me, Madam!" he exclaimed; "while I am trifling here, the King has left to plan my ruin."

"I was ignorant of His Majesty's resolution," the Queen quietly replied.

The Queen then re-entered her litter and returned to the Tuileries.

She found the Royal Guards and the Swiss had already started. The Court and attendants were following in the greatest disorder. Catharine sent instructions to the troops to press forward to join the King, who had only thirty gentlemen of his Court with him. He slept the first night at a small village, and arrived the next day at Chartres, where Nicholas de Thou procured him a favourable reception, notwithstanding the opposition of a large body of the League.

When Sixtus V. heard that the Duke of Guise had disobeyed the King's command by entering Paris, he exclaimed, "What folly! what rashness!" "Oh, the weak monarch!" he said when he learnt that the King had lost this opportunity of arresting the Duke; but he changed his exclamation into "Oh, the weak Duke!" when he found that the Duke had, in his turn, permitted the King to escape.

Pasquier says:—

"Puisque le duc avait eu l'imprudence de

venir lui-même le Roi aurait dû le faire arrêter, il le pouvait le Mardi et le Mercredi, parce qu'il avait pour lui tous les capitaines du quartier, toutes les cours Souveraines, la bonne bourgeoisie, et quatre mille Suisses, outre sa garde; le menu peuple n'aurait osé branler, Le jeudi matin encore il pouvait le faire enfermer par les troupes, si par une mauvaise politique il n'avait pas, pour ainsi dire, lié les mains des soldats en leur défendant d'attaquer le peuple, lorsqu'il commença les barricades. Mais puisque Guise avait surmonté tous ces dangers, il n'aurait jamais dû laissé sauver le Roi, il fallait, malgré lui, prendre un état auprès de lui, et ensuite on en aurait tiré telle déclaration qu'on aurait voulu."*

* "The King had a narrow escape," d'Aubigné says; "it was very fortunate for Henry that his troops kept possession of the Faubourg St. Honoré, and the back of the Tuileries, and that no one of the League thought of seizing these quarters; those who guarded one barricade at the gate, fired at a distance on the King's troops, and cut the cable of the ferry boat in which they supposed the King to be."

Sully writes, "the Duke's design in this enterprise has given rise to great disputes, which I cannot here enter into a

The Duke soon recovered his composure, and was as calm as though he had connived at the King's escape. He now resolved to retain possession of Paris. He assembled the people,

detail of; those who will have it that he intended to permit the people to carry things to any extremity, to seize the King's person, in a word, to put the Crown on his own head support their assertions by evidence of great importance. There are letters in which the Duke mentions the King very disrespectfully, and the Princes with the utmost contempt. There has been brought against him the pretended right of the House of Lorraine to the Crown. The Cardinal, his brother, is accused of wishing to make himself sovereign of Metz, under the protection of the Emperor.

In the Duke's justification there is a manifesto which he drew up himself. He, in this, declares that it was the King's intention to fill the city with foreigners, and to overpower the citizens, which was the true cause of the populace rising; that instead of supporting the people, he, the Duke, had made use of all his influence until two hours after midnight to calm the tumult; that he had prevented the massacre, and, so far from attempting anything against the King's person, had entreated the rebels to respect the royal authority.

" I might," he added, " have stopped him a thousand times had I been disposed to do so; that in treating with the Queen-

who were more vehement than ever in their acclamations. He appointed his own officers in all the quarters, who superseded those of the King. He sent for Harlay, the First President, to desire him to call a Parliament, in order to take the measures most desirable under the circumstances. He was astonished at the eminent magistrate's refusal to obey him.

"It is to be regretted," said Harlay, "when the valet drives away the master. As for me, my soul belongs to God, my heart to the King, and my body now to the wicked."

And when he was still further pressed by the Duke, he replied,

"When the Majesty of the King is violated, the magistrate has no longer any authority."

The Duke, however, was not to be defeated;

Mother, he attached the most importance to the security of religion; that it was not in his own interest he negotiated, but in that of the Cardinal of Bourbon, whose interest he supported against that of the King of Navarre and the other Princes of the Blood."

he found in the next President, Brisson, a magistrate more amenable to his wishes. He then visited the Foreign Ministers, and assured them of their safety under his protection.

Nor were military preparations overlooked. He occupied the Arsenal and the Bastille. Order was entirely re-established; all the barricades were removed, and in two days every trace of commotion had disappeared. The neighbouring towns and villages were occupied by his troops. At the same time, he did not cease to carry on his negotiations with the King by means of couriers.

He wrote two letters, one to the King, the other to the people; both of them soldierlike, brave, but audacious; and he rises to the height of his bold undertaking. He says that on that occasion God had put it in his power to confer a signal service on his country. He recounts the occurrences of that day without any expression of doubt or sense of error, and concludes with a bold declaration, that in the face of the whole world he will uphold the Catholic party, and expel from the Court all the favourites and

heretics, mentioning, amongst others, the Duke d'Epernon.*

The position of the Duke seemed impregnable. The Queen-Mother was at a loss what course to take. Bitterly did she repent the King's weakness, which prevented him seizing the Duke's person when he was in his power. She now saw clearly the difficulties of the situation. There was but one course to take; the Duke must fall. But how? The moment this absolute necessity forced itself on her mind, her

* This letter was a reply to one from the King, which the grandson of the Chancellor de l'Hôpital thus describes:

"Il y a une déclaration du Roi sur ce qui est arrivé à Paris contre lui-même. Mais cela, si froid, si timide, que rien plus qu'un homme qui se plaint, et n'ose troubler celui que l'a battu; comme un homme qui a peur que son ennemi soit encore en colère, et ne veuille se contenter du mal qu'il lui a fait. Il n'ose dire qu'il ait été contraint de s'enfuir, ni qu'on l'ait chassé; il n'ose appeler cela un crime. A peine déclare-t-il qu'il en fera punition; ne commande plus à son peuple, mais le prie; mande que l'on fasse supplications aux églises, afin que cette querelle se puisse bientôt appaiser, comme s'il avait peur que M. de Guise fut offensé de ce qu'il ne s'était pas laissé prendre, mais s'en était fui."

fertile brain was occupied night and day with schemes. Force was out of the question; that had been tried, and failed. She had to contend against the idol of the people, whose very name was a watchword for a great part of France, whose black feather was as much an oriflamme to his faithful followers as the white plume of Henry of Navarre was to his troops on the battle-field. Surrounded as he ever was by the most trustworthy friends, how was any blow, now, ever to be struck? Moreover, all his suspicions were awakened. He knew well that mortal offence had been given, and that Henry never forgave. For Catharine there was but one course to recommend; it had been practised before, and had succeeded. She possessed one weapon, of which she was the greatest mistress. With that arm she had triumphed on the day of St. Bartholomew, and might triumph again; that was Dissimulation.

The first thing was to concede every demand, but with just so much reserve as to convey the impression of a deep sense of serious obligation, and thus to lull all suspicions, and give

him a sense of security. Constant conferences were held by the Queen-Mother with the Duke and the Cardinal of Bourbon. There were present on these occasions De Lausac, Lénoncourt, Des Châteillons, and Miron, first physician to His Majesty. As the result of these meetings the Parliament of Paris was convoked to draw up a treaty called the Edict of Union; and as this edict was supposed to to lay the foundation of a lasting peace between the King and his powerful subject, and between the League and the Huguenots, in order to give the utmost solemnity to the occasion the States-General were convoked to meet at Blois.

The great struggle was now about to commence, not to terminate until the catastrophe which deprived France of her greatest captain. What would be the result of the meeting of the States-General? Were they likely to confirm the Duke in the vast powers and privileges extorted from the Sovereign, or would they denounce the vaulting ambition of the rebel subject? If energy, an iron will, and vigilance were to determine the conflict, the result could not be

doubtful. Henry, the King, was occupied with frivolous changes in his Court; Henry of Guise was employed in selecting everywhere his strongest partizans to be chosen for the States. All this time the King seemed determined to carry out the Treaty of Union in the strictest sense. In conformity with its provisions, the Duke was declared General-in-Chief of the armies of the King. The fortified places demanded by the Leaguers were given over to them, and were immediately occupied by their forces. The King withdrew his most faithful Governors and officers from the command of the different towns and provinces, and these were replaced by the officers of the Holy Union. The Duke of Mayenne was appointed to the command of the army which was intended to act against Montmorency. The Duke of Guise declined to collect his forces to oppose the King of Navarre; all his interest was centred in the States-General, which were convoked for the first days of October, when the Duke hoped that the concessions made to him would be registered and confirmed.

Jacta est alea. Guise had cast the die; his ambition was made of the sternest stuff, and like Montrose he might have exclaimed:

> "He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his desert is small,
> Who dare not put it to the touch,
> To win or lose it all."

He had arrived at this stage in his career when there was no safety in a hesitating policy; like one who, climbing a precipice, finds it is almost impossible to return however dangerous and steep the ascent to the summit; opposed to the Duke was the "divinity which hedges kings"—that intuitive attachment to monarchy, which until the close of the last century was a part of the French nature, and which condemned his ambition as treasonable and criminal, however much the errors of the King and the contemptible conduct of his favourites offended the nation. Still in the Duke's favour there existed a great combination of advantageous circumstances; there was his elevated nature, his high character, his noble and generous qualities,

the number of his partizans that were certain to be elected to the States-General, and whose careers were entirely dependent on his success. His strong Catholic views commanded the sympathy of a great majority of the nation; while the King's religious opinions were mistrusted by all his own party. He had, it was well known, intrigued with the King of Navarre, and was prepared at any time to sacrifice his most earnest convictions for a temporary object. He could place no reliance on the fidelity of the Princes of the Blood; the Cardinal of Bourbon, and Charles his nephew, the Cardinal of Vendôme, the Prince of Conti, and the Count of Soissons, the Duke of Montpensier and his son, these possessed little influence with the Leaguers, and were all eclipsed by the Duke of Guise; it seemed as though the States-General would be mainly composed of adherents of the great Duke, for the King of Navarre, the heir-presumptive to the throne, did not intend to present himself before an Assembly composed almost entirely of his enemies, which however had been legally convoked by the Sovereign, and in which it was

proposed to record the sacrifices made by the King in the interest of peace.

Guise neglected no precaution that could lead to a result favourable to his aspirations. He knew that at a word he could raise Paris, La Brie, Picardy, Normandy, the Soissonais, Burgundy, and Orleans; in fact, all the provinces near the capital. In the remainder the chief towns were devoted to him; his sympathisers were found amongst the chief nobility; the magistrates, the clergy, doctors learned in the law, the curates in the smallest villages, exerted themselves in his behalf: and their enthusiasm would even have converted the masses into soldiers if required.

It was a great and solemn occasion this meeting of the States-General. Ruggieri and the other astrologers had foretold that the close of 1588 would witness terrible calamities; the atmosphere was full of electricity, everyone felt that a crisis was approaching. The Château of Blois in its gloomy grandeur, already associated with so many dark deeds, seemed a fitting theatre for great events. Passing through

the Gothic portal, the Deputies entered a large court surrounded by a richly carved and decorated cloister, thence a grand marble stair led to the magnificent banqueting hall in which the States-General were to assemble; the embrasures rather than windows admitted only dim rays of light into the vast but gloomy apartment; the heavy timbered roof with the dark oak carvings added to the general sombre effect, which were only relieved by the gilt salamanders of Francis I. and the love-knots of H. and D., with which the walls were profusely covered.

In this stately but gloomy hall, the walls of which were hung with rich velvet for the occasion, on the 16th October, 1588, the States-General assembled. The Clergy numbered one hundred and thirty-four Deputies, the Nobles one hundred and forty-eight, and the Tiers-Etat one hundred and eighty-one. The Nobles on this great occasion vied with each other in splendour and in the number of their retainers, who lined the passages, or stood in groups in the court. The Clergy, in lace and

purple, indulged in all the varieties of priestly pomp, and even the Tiers-Etat assumed an attitude of independence—the precursor of that which was to be developed at Versailles two centuries later. Never had a nobler assemblage met in this ancient castle. Between the third and fourth row of columns by which the hall is divided, a dais was raised, on which thrones of state were placed for the King, Catharine de Médicis, and the Queen Louise; the Captains of the Guard and a hundred Gentlemen of the Chamber stood behind the throne. As Grand-Master of the Royal Household, the Duke of Guise did the honours of the first meeting. Mathieu describes his presence on this important occasion. As soon as the Deputies were seated and the doors closed, the Duke of Guise entered and sat on a chair of state; "his dress was entirely of white satin, he wore jewelled orders of chivalry round his neck, his sword-belt and the scabbard were covered with pearls. His eyes seemed to pierce through the Assembly, as if he would discover who were his friends and who his opponents; and by his glance to

confirm the former in their confidence, and the latter in their fears; his look seemed to say, "I see you all, I know your thoughts." After he had been seated for a few moments, he rose, saluted the Deputies, and followed by a number of his gentlemen and the captain of his guard, he left the hall to meet the King, who entered immediately afterwards with great dignity.

It was on such occasions that Henry appeared in a manner worthy of greatness. He was able to shake off his apathy, and to develop an unwonted energy. When he addressed the States he expressed himself in eloquent terms as to the necessity of maintaining the Catholic Faith; he declared how greatly he was affected by the sufferings of the people; he enlarged on the reform of abuses, on his determination to do equal justice to all classes and to all opinions, claiming from them at the same time the homage and fidelity due to the Sovereign; he trusted that now all party distinctions and party cries would be merged in one great aim—the good of the nation; and he promised that all important matters should be fairly deliberated by the

States-General. His whole tone was that of a monarch who loved his people, and felt as their father. If any fault was found with his discourse, it was that he showed too much consideration for the Leaguers; and the Archbishop of Lyons, aware that this speech would be printed and circulated, invited the King to suppress some of the qualifying expressions. Henry was very displeased; it taught him, he said, how little he could hope to appease the violence of faction, and what he had to expect in the future.*

The result of the meeting of the States-General was very unsatisfactory. M. de Thou observes that, like all such assemblies, they came to no conclusion, and turned every question into one of party; various propositions were made, and nothing was agreed to, except that the Edict of Union was accepted as a fundamental law of the nation; the King took

* On the contrary, the Duke thought the King's speech was much too unfavourable to the League; he interpreted one of the expressions as menacing, and full of danger for the future.

the oath of fidelity to the new Constitution, and all the Deputies after him.

Suddenly a great difficulty arose. The States-General insisted that the King of Navarre, the next heir, should be excluded from the throne, which indeed he already was indirectly by the Treaty of Union. In answer to this demand the King produced a protestation of the King of Navarre, who complained that he was not afforded an opportunity of pleading his own cause. The majority, the Leaguers, refused to take his protest into their consideration, alleging that the King had been excommunicated by the Pope, and declared to be a heretic and a pervert. The King saw he was powerless to resist the Leaguers, and that the elements of civil war and renewed struggles existed as powerful as ever. Henry was really anxious to control and appease this religious warfare, which menaced the whole nation with ruin. He was, however, forced to yield, and could only hope to reverse this edict by patience and time. For one moment Henry gained in the Assembly a great advantage over the Duke of Guise. It was

suddenly announced that the Duke of Savoy, the Duke of Guise's greatest ally, had occupied the Marquisate of Saluces. The whole Assembly with one patriotic impulse denounced the usurpation, and cried aloud for war. The Duke had the skill to acquiesce in the universal denunciation, although it was shrewdly imagined that he had connived at the act. He joined with the King in a declaration of war against the Duke; but at the same time insisted that hostilities should be in no way relaxed against the Huguenots, and proposed a reduction in all the taxes. Henry saw at once it was intended to render all government impossible. He would have to carry on two wars with diminished resources, and one war against the next heir to the throne—who alone was able in any way to counterpoise the ambition of the House of Guise and its great chief; the King felt the time had come when it was necessary to take a decided step in self-defence.

The Duke of Guise was triumphant; he had been confirmed by the States in all the em-

ployments and offices he had extorted from the King. But he was well aware that Henry would seize the first opportunity to recover his lost ground. It is asserted that at this time the Duke had planned some great stroke of policy. The Duke of Mayenne, his brother, dropped some expressions that tended to alarm the King and the court. This is certain, that he filled up every place with his creatures—governments, military commands were all given away in the King's name to his own people. The Maréchal d'Aumont demanded an audience of the King, and repeated to him expressions which had fallen from the Duke, which clearly indicated that his ambition was even now not satisfied. In this the hour of his triumph he professed the greatest discontent and little faith in Henry's assurances of goodwill.

In a conversation with the Maréchal d'Aumont, he once formally stated his ground of complaint and mistrust; he said "that although he was created General of the Armies of France, all the commands of the provinces had not been transferred by the King to him, and that Henry

had since made appointments in his own name." He insisted that the States should declare him the Connétable of France, so that he might carry on the war against the heretics even against the King's wishes. He begged the Maréchal to second him in his demands, promising him, if he would do so, the Government of Normandy; the Maréchal, although a staunch Leaguer, was one of those who always stood by the throne, and at once refused to entertain this proposition. The Duke asked him if he doubted his word, and before he could prevent it, the Duke drew his dagger, turned his shirt sleeve up to his elbow, and attempted to open a vein to sign the promise with his blood.

Guise, also, as Generalissimo, demanded as many Royal Guards as the King; of course, these added to his own followers and retainers would have given him such a force as to place the King in a position of constant peril. The King refused this demand, and the Duke muttered threats even in the royal presence. Henry also refused to give up the city of Orleans to the Sainte Union as a place of safety. The

Duke insolently declared he would seize and hold it without permission. The Duchess of Montpensier, his sister, expressed herself in the most inconsiderate manner. She carried about her a pair of gold scissors; "they were intended," she said, "to cut the King's hair into the form worn by monks whenever the day arrived when he should be shut up in a monastery."

And yet there were many friends of the Duke who watched, with great anxiety, his extreme audacity, and the King's apparent patience, and implored the former not to abuse his great position. They represented to him the danger to which he was exposing, not only himself, but his wife and his children, who were still so young; but to all these remonstrances the Duke replied that he had himself been deprived at a tender age of a father by the perfidious hands of heretics, and was left, with his brother, an object of hatred to all the enemies of his house. He had never on that account ceased to struggle on to raise the fortunes of the family of so great a father, or even to avenge his fate; he should leave to that

Providence, that had hitherto vouchsafed to protect him, the care of his children. But they were not born to interfere with his projects. If he should be taken from them before they had attained full age, it would be for them to raise their fortunes as he had raised his own; and by their lives to prove themselves worthy of their illustrious lineage and of a great destiny.*

The Duke, having escaped from the great danger he ran when he visited the King at the Louvre on the day of the barricades, could not

* Lacretelle in his "History of France during the Religious Wars," describes the Duke of Guise very differently.

"It is usual to represent the Duke as a man violent, impatient, and who relies on his audacity; never, on the contrary, was there any man who combined great projects with greater method. He wished to base his usurpation on that of Pepin le Bref; he placed little reliance on his intimate followers, and even the applause of the multitude failed to mislead him. He would have preferred the power without the title of king, to the title with uncertain or precarious powers. He was absorbed in politics, and possessed a certain elevation of intellect, but no real greatness of mind; he rather resembled his uncle, the Cardinal of Lorraine, than his illustrious father, Francis, Duke of Guise."

imagine that Henry was capable of any great resolution; and no arguments or persuasion would make him see his danger, notwithstanding the many warnings he received. One day at dinner he found a note hid under his napkin, which informed him of the King's secret councils, and of the peril which menaced him; he tore it up, only remarking, "Il n'oserait!" He also relied on the number of retainers by whom he was surrounded, who, in general, outnumbered the Royal Guards; and who at any time could sooner have made the King prisoner than the King the Duke.

But the Duke, with all his astuteness, failed to perceive that it is precisely weak men who are the most capable, at moments, of the boldest resolutions. Cowards, from the very consciousness of weakness, rush in desperation on dangers which men of calm courage will avoid. Besides, in the Duke's case, a false confidence was thus engendered, and all precautions were regarded as superfluous.*

* Sully, estimating the character of Henry, says:

"No one knows what changes a Prince who delivers him-

If the Duke had been less powerful, or more cautious, the King, it is probable, would have kept faith with him, and the terrible catastrophe would have been averted; but the King did not

self up to irresolution, idleness, and timidity, is capable of assuming in affairs of state, nothing is more dangerous than a mind fluctuating and undetermined; after having fixed on a particular design, every step that leads to it ought to be regulated by wise and cool reflection. In critical circumstances, nothing ought to be more carefully avoided than keeping the people in suspense between peace and war: it was not by maxims like these that Catharine's counsellors conducted themselves. If they formed any resolution, it lasted but for a moment, was never carried out to the end; and so timorously that it afforded a very imperfect remedy for the existent evil. The fault of minds occupied by little trifling intrigues; and in general of all those who possess more vivacity than judgment, is to magnify to themselves objects that are near in such a manner as to be deceived by them, and to see those objects that are distant as through a cloud.

"To this fault of never being able to resolve upon anything, the King, or rather the Queen-Mother, added another still greater: this was the use of I know not what kind of affected dissimulation, or rather of hypocrisy and deceit; without which she imagined her policy could never be successful."

dare assert his own will, while to grant the Duke all the powers he demanded was to abdicate the throne.

At this moment everything was in favour of his great subject; it was Guise himself who had insisted on the convocation of the States-General. And even the place of meeting, the Château of Blois, had been selected by him because he loved the Touraine. During the weeks which elapsed between the meeting of the States, and the closing scene, fête succeeded fête, and pageant pageant. All through the Province, the name of Guise was a household and loved word. When the King appeared, surrounded by his Court and favourites, he was received with moody silence, sometimes even with murmurs. Not so Le Balafré, the great Duke, at his approach, every head was bowed; and as he rode on the banks of the Loire, surrounded by brilliant cavaliers and by graceful ladies, or strolled in this pleasant company on the terraces, or in the plaisaunce which commanded the view of the beautiful plain, crowds collected to gaze

on their great hero, who—as the Maréchal de Retz said—possessed so much grandeur in his appearance that the greatest princes sank into insignificance.

CHAPTER V.

THE night of the 21st of December, 1588, was at Blois dark and gloomy. During the day the wide landscape of hills and dales, the plain rich in its cultivation, the rapid Loire and tributary streams, had looked beautiful even through the pale gleams of the Winter's sun. Towards evening the black masses of clouds portended a storm. The moon, as it rose, shone fitfully on the tall white donjon tower, with its deep, round-headed windows; each angle of the ill-omened feudal castle stood forth in relief, while the heavy buttresses cast their shadows across the terrace called La Perche,* where Le Balafré

* Brantôme says; "La Perche aux Bretons, sorte de terrasse à balustres de fer, célèbre dans les fastes du château; et sur laquelle les yeux tournés vers les fenêtres de leur maîtresse, perchaient les gentilshommes de la Reine Anne, les

was walking.* There were watchers below, to whom he was an object of interest. They observed that he was gesticulating in a wild, excitable manner; his step, usually slow and dignified, was hurried and uncertain. At moments he would pause, fold his arms, and seem wrapt in thought. The dark flow of the rapid river, and the wind whistling through the battlements, were the only sounds that broke the stillness of the night. What ambitions, what projects, what hopes, what fears were chasing each other across the mind of the Great Duke, even as the clouds were chasing each other across the pale moonlight!

"L'approche de la mort fait voir vrai."

There was another awake on this night,

fidèles gardiens qui jamais ne failloient, quand elle sortit de sa chambre, de l'attendre sur cette petite terrasse de Blois, qu'on appelle encore 'la Perche aux Bretons;' elle mesme l'ayant ainsi nommé quand elle les y voyait. 'Voilà mes fidèles Bretons, qui sont,' disait elle, 'sur la Perche, qui m'attendent.'"

* He was called Le Balafré from a scar on the left cheek below his eye, which he received at the battle of Château-Thierry, fighting against the Huguenots.

who watched the skies, intently gazing on the few stars whose light from time to time gleamed through the heavy clouds. Catharine de Medicis, ill, care-worn, and debilitated, had been carried to her observatory. She was aware that in the King's apartment a Council was to be held, in which the fate of the King, of the Duke, and thus the future of France would be decided. It is believed that she gave no counsel to the King on this momentous occasion; but with the familiars of her household, shut up in this pavilion, she tried to cast the horoscope of what remained to her of life, that life now so swiftly waning. What long years had swept by since she landed from her beloved Italy to become the daughter of France! Since she had passed through the Bride's Gate of St. Victor's Church, in all the sweetness of her childlike bloom, more than half a century had elapsed. No foresight, no foreknowledge of the future could change the inevitable past. What scenes of sadness and sorrow, what painful memories must have crowded upon her mind during this long,

dreary, stormy night, as she gazed on the heavens, watching the stars one by one dying out, even like the light of her life.

In addition to the great marble stair which leads to the grand hall of the Château, there is another smaller one, conducting from the Galerie des Cerfs to the suite of apartments occupied by the King. Here were two rooms communicating with each other, the Cabinet Vieux and the Cabinet Neuf. In the Cabinet Vieux were two doors; one, which led into a narrow passage, was closed, to prevent any escape through it, or the arrival of aid from the court below. On this eventful night to these rooms the chief Councillors of the King were introduced, but singly, to avoid observation; while Le Balafré paced the terrace in deep meditation, and Catharine was in her observatory, the destiny she vainly endeavoured to foretell was being accomplished. The question submitted to the Council was the arrest or the assassination of the Duke. The discussion was a prolonged one. It was not any

compunction at shedding blood that made the King hesitate to decide on assassination; but he trembled at the possible consequences of such a deed, from the wide-spread popularity of the Duke, at whose death he well knew thousands of swords would be unsheathed; moreover he never moved except accompanied by retainers, whose number certainly equalled, even if they did not exceed the Royal Guards, any attempt against his person was therefore attended with great danger. On the other hand, it was urged that the King had missed the opportunity of seizing the Duke at the Louvre on the day of the barricades; that he had disheartened his followers by not having made use of the opportunity afforded him by the Duke himself, when the King was urged by the Duke of Epernon to let his guards assassinate him on the way to the Palace, and Alphonse Avinano had offered to murder the Duke with his own hand if the King would sanction the deed. It was argued that it was a matter of life and death for the King and the Royal party; that assassination was not a crime in self-defence; and on this occasion it was not only for self-

preservation, but the preservation of the peace of the kingdom.

It was late at night before any resolution was arrived at. At last the King and the Council resolved on the murder of his great subject and rival. Nine of the most trustworthy of the guards, introduced by Loignac, First Gentleman of the Bedchamber, were brought to the King, who distributed the poniards with his own hand. He said to each,

"It is an execution of justice which I desire you to make on the greatest criminal in my kingdom, whom all laws human and divine permit me to punish; and not having the ordinary means of justice in my power, I command you, by the right inherent in my royal authority, to strike the blow."

Two in the morning struck before the plans were all matured. So greatly was the Duke feared that every precaution had to be taken. It was resolved to summon him to an early Council. This the members insisted on, not to allow the irresolute King time to change

his mind. A more difficult question arose, how to dispose of the Duke's large body-guard; it was intended by some stratagem to detain them in the outer court, after the Duke entered the Castle.

Sleep forsook the King. He passed the remainder of the night in the greatest agitation, placing his most faithful followers in all the corridors, and guarding every passage by which the Duke might escape or his retainers enter. As each fresh detachment of guards arrived, the gates of the Château were locked, so that no one should return to tell of the precautions taken within.

At eight o'clock on the 22nd December, the Duke was informed that the King, wishing to have the day entirely free, would hold a council at nine, and to insure Le Balafré's presence it was hinted that the most important matters were to be discussed, touching not only himself but many of his friends—this was quite sufficient to secure his attendance, for he was ever faithful to his friends, and loved to show his power.

He walked from his residence to the great

gates as usual, accompanied by a large guard; when he entered the court the captain of the Royal Guard bareheaded, and with the lowest obeisance, presented him with a petition, the purport of which was that the Royal Guard prayed him as Grand-Master of the Household to urge their necessities, and the circumstance of their pay being largely in arrears, on the King's consideration. The Duke was highly flattered, and expressed himself so to a group of officers of the guard, assuring them they might rely on his using all his influence with the King in their behalf. They bowed low at his great condescension, and at the same time closed round him, thus cutting him off from his own guards. As soon as he had placed his foot on the grand stair the inner gates were closed, the steps were lined with troops, who received him with due honour. The great hall of the States he found full of officers, who made way, showing him the utmost deference and courtesy; he had reached the upper end of the gallery when a message arrived from the King commanding the Duke, before the council as-

sembled, to attend His Majesty in the Vieux Cabinet.

Whether from sudden indisposition or from a presentiment of danger, the Duke became very pale, and complained of pain in his heart; he sat down while some restoratives were being brought him—suddenly on looking round he for the first time realized the fact that none of his friends were near him. He felt the extreme danger of his situation; at that moment, had he pleaded illness and left the Hall, it is probable his life would have been saved. Many of the officers were entirely ignorant why they had been summoned so early to the château. The great authority of the Duke, and his majestic presence, would have overawed any but secret assassins, while the gates would have been thrown open at his approach, but it was too late; a second message came from the King, and Le Balafré, proceeded to the Vieux Cabinet; before leaving the hall, he turned and bowed low to the assemblage of gentlemen, who all saluted him in return. The folding doors of the

room were thrown open; there was a portière, which the Duke raised his hand to put aside, when his arm was seized by Montsérey, who with the other hand stabbed him in the side, exclaiming "Traitor, you are to die." Des Effrenats struck at his legs, Saint Malines passed his hand behind the Duke's shoulders and forced his dagger between the joints of his cuirass; it was a moment of horrible confusion. Loignac wounded his victim in the face with blind fury. The Duke cried out "To me, my friends! to me, my friends!" and at last, "Mercy, mercy!" By an expiring effort the Duke shook himself free, his arms were extended, his mouth open, his eyes fixed, and he fell forward in his murderer's room. The King, stationed in the Cabinet Neuf, had listened with breathless attention to this terrible death struggle, when the body fell he opened the door with precaution his pale face appeared, and he gazed on the scene of blood.

"Is he quite dead?" he whispered with colourless lips to Loignac, who raised the head

and let it fall again. It was only then that the King dared approach to gaze on the corpse of his enemy. "Mon Dieu," he exclaimed, "qu'il est grand, il paraît plus grand encore mort que vivant."

The royal murderer then stepped over the body of his victim, and brutal in his cowardly ferocity spurned it with his foot.*

The Cardinal of Guise, his brother, and the

* At the enquiry instituted by the Duchesse de Guise, Etienne d'Orgayn deposed:

"Un des deux religieux que Henri III. dans la matinée du jour où il méditait d'accomplir ce qu'il appelait sa justice, avait fait enfermer dans son oratoire, en leur recommandant de prier pour le Roi 'pût venir à bout d'une enterprise qu'il désirait faire pour le repos de son royaume.' Regardant au travers d'un tapis qui estait au-devant de la porte proche du cabinet, il aperçut Loignac et Le Guast qui dançaient ensemble. Icelvy Guast tenant en sa main un poignard tout nud, lequel il laissa tomber, puis le ramassa, et disoient ensemblement que, sitost qu'il serait entré, il se fallait ruer sur luy, le poignarder, puis le jetter par la fenestre. Tost après, lui et son compagnon ouyrent un fort grand bruit en la chambre du Roy, et fort proche du cabinet, et ouyrent comme un homme qui s'escriait haut en ces mots: 'ha! ha!' et incontinent après, ne sçait qui leur veut dire, que Le Sieur de Guise était mort."

Archbishop of Lyons, waiting to attend the council, hearing the noise guessed the cause; they attempted to rush to his succour, but it was too late, they were both arrested in the name of the King. The Duke's mother and his sons, the Cardinal de Bourbon, his principal relations, wherever they resided, were all made prisoners. Henry then sought his mother, who after the night watches had been carried to her bed, never to rise from it again.

"The King of Paris exists no longer, Madame, and now I am really King of France."

"You have killed the Duke," she replied, "God grant that his death may not make you king of nothing. C'est coupé, mon fils, mais il faut coudre."

"The King of Paris dead, and Henry really King of France." No, not so. The Cardinal of Guise was arrested with the Archbishop of Lyons, and murdered the next day in the Salle des Oubliettes, by the Capitaine du Guast; but the Duke of Mayenne, his brother, escaped, and was immediately proclaimed in Paris Lieutenant-General of the Crown of France. All France

heard the tidings with dismay; the great beloved Captain was dead, and all the people wept. The troubled and astonished multitude thronged the streets of Paris with piteous lamentations, exclaiming: "Our great man is taken from us."

"On s'abordait," says the historian, "d'un air lugubre; on s'embrassait avec une silence farouche, les yeux remplis de pleurs, le cœur serré, comme si l'on se fût dit le dernier adieu." The churches could not contain the crowds who pressed in to weep and pray, kneeling at that altar which he had ever defended. The Angel of Death seemed to have spread his wings over France, Shadows, clouds, and darkness rested on the land; but the day of a terrible reckoning was at hand, and two weeks after, on the 5th of the following January, Catharine de Medicis died,* and in

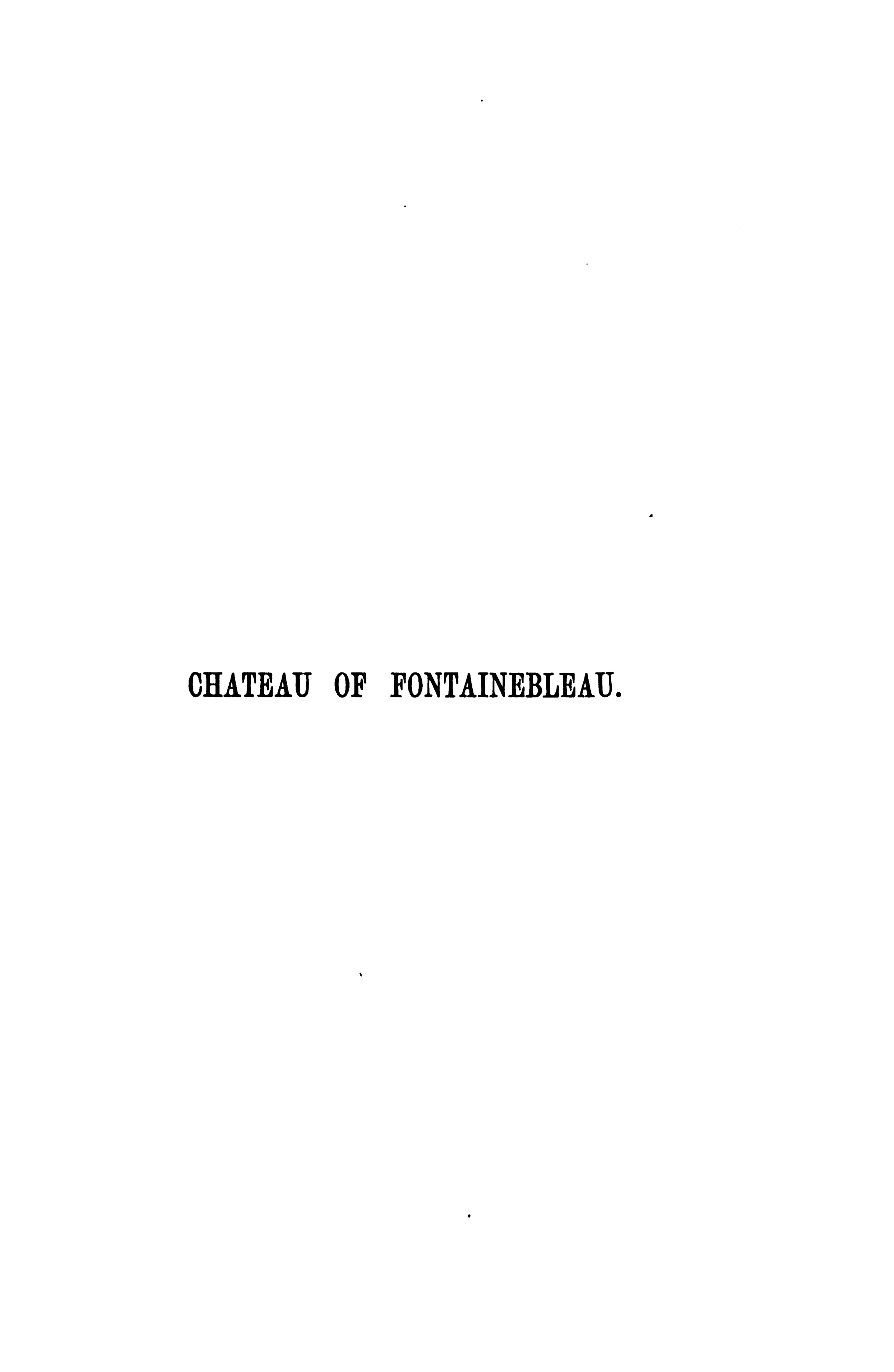
* Brantôme entirely exonerates the Queen of any participation in this assassination, he describes her death at Blois.

"Elle mourut à Blois de tristesse à cause du massacre qui se fit, et de la triste tragédie qui se joua, et voyant que sans y penser elle avait fait venir là les Princes pensant bien faire, ainsi que Monsieur le Cardinal de Bourbon luy dit: 'Hêlas! Madame, vous nous avez tous menez à la boucherie sans y

August of that same year, the dagger of Jacques Clément vindicated the foul murder of Henry, Duke of Guise. "All they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword."

penser!' cela lui toucha si fort le cœur, et la mort de ces pauvres gens, qu'elle se remit au lit, ayant été auparavant malade et oncques plus n'en réleva.

"On dit que, lorsque le Roy luy annonça la mort de Monsieur de Guise, et qu'il estait Roy absolu, sans compagnon, 'muy maistre;' elle lui demanda s'il avait mis ordre aux affaires de son royaume, avant de faire ce coup. Il répondit qu'ouy. 'Dieu le veuille, mon fils!' dit-elle. Comme très prudente qu'elle estait, elle prévoyait bien ce qui luy devait advenir, et à tout le royaume."



CHATEAU OF FONTAINEBLEAU.

CHAPTER I.

IN former days, before it became the object of the traveller to arrive as rapidly as possible at his destination, regardless of the beauties of nature, or of time-honoured associations, there were few, with time at their command, who passed the Château of Fontainebleau without visiting what has been justly termed one of the brightest jewels of the French crown. This Palace, the creation of many different architectural epochs, each of which is connected with its especial interest, is not only beautiful as a whole, but beautiful in all its detail. Of the many royal châteaux which France possesses, there is none which, for a long succession of years, has been associated with so many remarkable events, and such great

historic names. We can there recall the History of France from the reign of Louis VII. to that of Napoleon I.; from the consecration of the Chapel of Saint Saturnin by Thomas-à-Beckett, to the famous Adieux de Fontainebleau, the parting of the great Emperor and the Vieille Garde. Philippe Auguste, St. Louis and his mother, Blanche of Castille, and after them, a long line of Kings made Fontainebleau their favourite residence; and each, in turn, added to the beauty or grandeur of the palace, while happily none circumscribed the extent of the wide surrounding demesne. Here and there a small town or village has arisen on the confines of the forest; but in general its integrity has been preserved, while many Sovereigns have added to its extent. François I., to whom so many châteaux of France owe their origin, preservation, and adornment, either by purchase, or by the simpler process of confiscation, greatly extended its limits.

What the Forest of Fontainebleau was in the eleventh century, it remains in the nineteenth; modern improvement has not destroyed its wild-

ness, or invaded its solitude; within a comparatively limited space, every variety of scenery may be found; ranges of hills, deep ravines, rocky passes, beautiful glades, in which the wild flowers blossom, and mossy banks inviting travellers to repose. How many pageants, how many gay and festive scenes, what joyous hunting mornings, what happy trystings have been associated with this forest! The historian who wanders through its wild and picturesque scenery will recall important and interesting events of which this was the scene. Each gallery and stately apartment within the Palace is rich in souvenirs, many graceful and pleasing, not a few gloomy and sinister. Among the latter stands out, in bold relief, the dark crime committed by Christine of Sweden. No one passes through the Galerie des Cerfs without listening to the terrible tale of the death of Monaldeschi.

In the history of Sovereign Princes, few have rivalled the Queen of Sweden in her remarkable character, talent, energy, and eccentricity. She lived at that period when the personal qualities of the Sovereign had great weight in the

government of the country. Proclaimed Queen on the field of battle of Lützen, where her father, the Lion of the North, Gustavus Adolphus, nobly fell, she became, as an infant, the inheritor of a great name, and the idol of a nation of warriors; her life may be said to have dawned on the tumult of the battle-field and the excitement of camps. It may not be uninteresting to sketch her remarkable career from the day when, as the proclaimed successor of her illustrious father, she was welcomed with acclamations by the army, down to the terrible event which aroused the indignation of the whole civilized world, and has cast its dark shadow over her memory.

Few lives have been so eventful and agitated as that of Christine of Sweden; called at such an early age to the throne, with, unhappily, an intellectual capacity far beyond her years, her own caprices led to all the troubles and perplexities of her reign; her existence, one prolonged excitement, has greatly interested the historians of subsequent ages; and in the annals of Sweden the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus must ever fill a large space.

Gustavus Adolphus was one of those great captains who will ever live, not only in the History of a Nation, but in the imagination of the people. He possessed the heroic qualities which inspire enthusiasm, and the gentle, tender qualities which win the heart. As the great Protestant champion, he aroused the cold northern character to a more than Catholic fervour, imbued with intense sympathies. He was not only regarded as the Sovereign and Protector, but was the beloved of the nation. Not a hamlet, or cottage, in which his name was not glorified, as the symbol of the Faith, not only in the cause which he upheld, but in himself. A nation always grows in greatness when it can not only realise, but idealise its ruler or a cause. His portrait which was found in the humblest cottage as well as in the palace, did not represent one of those grand types of manhood which command the awe of the crowd; but he possessed a singular fascination, combined with intensity of will—a gentleness and even tenderness of manner which detracted in no way from the energy and vigour of his nature. He had, more-

over, an intuitive knowledge of character, so important a quality for those to possess who hope to govern men, and this enabled him to select statesmen and soldiers worthy to carry out his views in the council or in the field.

It was a great disappointment to Gustavus and to the whole nation when, in 1626, the Princess Christine was born. At that time men had faith in the predictions of astrologers, and these had been unanimous in foretelling the birth of a prince, one worthy to support the sceptre and to inherit the glory of the great Captain; but all these predictions were falsified by the event. There was a moment when it was a question whether even Gustavus Adolphus would be able to induce the nation to accept a female infant as his heir; whether they would not insist on the sceptre passing to the nearest male representative of the royal line. But, however mortified, the King concealed his disappointment, and his affection for the young child was increased by many accidents which befell her in her infancy when her life was on various occasions endangered. King Sigis-

mund of Poland, excluded from the throne as a Roman Catholic, was accused of being privy of a design against her life. Gustavus, to secure the succession, convoked the States-General when Christine was only a few months old, and the representatives of the nation consented from their love of the father to pay homage to the infant in the cradle as the heir of the great conqueror.

This ceremonial was renewed with still greater pomp before the King departed for the last time to command his forces. Then in the midst of the assembled troops, when every sword was unsheathed, and every plumed hat waved, the army with one accord saluted the daughter of the Warrior-King as their future Queen. It was a great and solemn occasion; the Grand Chancellor, Oxenstiern, was the first who in grave and noble language accepted the post of head of the Regency, and swore to protect the life and maintain the rights of the child of his loved Sovereign. When the King spoke his farewell, there was a universal presentiment that their Sovereign and Captain would never return

to them again. Dire omens had been observed, and with this superstitious people an omen was never forgotten. A large man-of-war sank at her moorings, without any apparent cause. Suddenly the water in the river was arrested in its flow. Sinister noises were heard during the watches of the night. Gustavus was not himself free from these superstitions, or it may have been that the feeling became contagious. On this occasion it was with unusual earnestness that he spoke. He expressed himself in such noble, generous, and heartfelt language that the old veterans of the camp were moved to tears. In heroic words he foretold a great victory, and almost foreshadowed at what a price it would be bought. And thus it was, the day of the glory, and of the mourning of Sweden dawned. On the plain of Lützen, and in the moment of victory, the great hero of the North expired.

CHAPTER II.

BEFORE the morning of the battle the King's thoughts were fixed on his child, for he wrote to Oxenstiern, recalling his oath of fidelity to Christine; he insisted on the importance of giving her such an education as should fit her for the sovereignty of a grave and great nation; he recommended that the utmost regard and attention should be paid to the Queen-Mother, but allowed her no voice either in state affairs or in the education of her daughter.

It was most fortunate for Sweden and the young Queen that there was at the head of the Government, filling the office of Grand Chancellor, so eminent a statesman as Oxenstiern, for frank and loyal as had been the fealty sworn

to Christine, there existed in Sweden a party opposed to a female succession; and not a few who preferred to it even a Republic. And it was not until after some stormy discussions that the assembled nobles renewed their oath of fidelity to the daughter of Gustavus II., surnamed the Great, as Queen and hereditary Princess of the Swedes, the Goths, and the Vandals.

The Chancellor Oxenstiern was one of those distinguished men well fitted to guide the destiny of a State, and who ably represented its requirements. His power of work has rarely been exceeded; after passing hours at the council-board, he found his relaxation in the discussion of abstruse political questions. He possessed that remarkable quality, the prerogative of only the greatest minds, such as was possessed in our own day by Napoleon and Wellington, the power of casting aside his anxieties with his work, and of rendering his thoughts obedient to his will. Only three events are said to have disturbed his rest: the death of Gustavus Adolphus, the loss of the

battle of Nördlingen, and the abdication of Christine. Chancellor of the Kingdom at twenty-four years of age, he remained during his whole life the guide, companion, counsellor, and friend of Gustavus and Christine. The abdication of the latter was the fatal blow to him; he did not survive the downfall of the family of his great chief.

The education of the young Queen was such as might have been expected from the directions left by Gustavus. She was taught to despise all female accomplishments, and to care as little for gossip and abundant idleness as for needlework and embroideries. Her time was devoted to abstruse studies, to sciences and languages; at fourteen she possessed as much learning as would have been remarkable in one twenty-four years older. Her favourite authors were Thucydides, Tacitus, Homer, and Virgil. She spoke fluently Italian, Spanish, and French; philosophy and mathematics were her intimate pursuits, nor were physical accomplishments overlooked. The daughter of the Warrior-King was taught to know and practise the

use of all arms. She was well skilled in the art of fence; no horse was too spirited for her to ride; there was no dance in which she did not excel all others in gracefulness and dignity of demeanour. Nor did her physical education terminate with these accomplishments. She, at an early age, resolved that her mind should never be the slave of her body, so she practised herself to run very long distances; to pass two days almost without sustenance, "to hunger and thirst" after self-control. Her suite were worn out by her excess of activity. Her great pleasure was to ride to a given object without being turned aside by any obstacle; dangerous steep ravines or the wildest mountain paths failed to arrest her; all this which was to her excitement, was misery to those whose duty it was to be near their Sovereign. As a rule that obligation was impossible to fulfil, every ride entailed an accident to some unfortunate member of the suite, who had to endure not only the painful consequence of the misadventure, but the ironical condolences of the Sovereign.

The Chancellor Oxensteirn may well have been anxious as to the future of the Queen of Sweden, when his pupil wrote to him, during a brief absence, expressing her regret that her sex precluded her from placing herself at the head of her army.

"Why," she asked, "am I not permitted to wear the cuirass, and gird on the sword? Why am I denied the excitement of the camp, and the vicissitudes of war? Why am I doomed to consume away my life in inaction? To sigh after a career which fate has denied to me, is the height of misery. Must I sacrifice all my ideas of Alexander, Cyrus, Cæsar? Is Clorinda never to be a reality for me? Why was Xenophon given me as a study, for my life to be empoisoned by impossible ambitions? Ah! if I could only put on a helmet and mount to the assault. But, like many others, I am a slave to that despotic sentence, 'Qu'en dira t'on.' It is a despotism I am powerless to resist, and it renders my life unbearable to me."

It is not the History of a Nation, but passages in the life of this eccentric, brilliant

extravagant Sovereign which this sketch purposes to review.

> " One moment of the mightiest, then again,
> On little objects with like firmness fixed,
> Extreme in all things."

Possessing intuitive knowledge of character, she was able to select generals for the command of the army; of whom it is sufficient to say that Prince Charles Augustus and Turenne learnt the Art of War under their command. It was in characteristic language that she advised the Prince Charles to join his army.

" Go," she said, " and under a great General learn to conquer. Go, my cousin, be happy, enjoy all the delights of life which the perspective offers to your view. Golden chains enshackle me and condemn me to inaction; join in life's race like a generous courser. Happy, a thousand times happy, in that you possess the privileges of manhood. I am only a Queen."

Yes! and as a Queen she was a mystery to her Household, to the Nation, to the

Age. Good and evil, works of excellence and of wrong, followed each other in rapid succession. In maturer years she writes:

"Nothing is so easy as, for those who have survived its storms, to regulate the life of the young; but these very people, so wise, so prudent in later years, cast them again on the wide seas of youthful temptation, and what would be their conduct? they would be as inconsiderate, as selfish, as unjust as ever, I never will condescend to apology. I paint myself as I am, a follower of an epicurean philosophy. Alas! this also fails me; for there come moments when the heart is tired of all—of the world as well as of repose—of solitude as well as of the Court. I then yield to attacks of melancholy; and am tired even of my vanities. I sink into a state of discouragement. Ah! at these moments all systems of thought, ancient or modern, seem to me so vain and idle; and then my only faith is in the philosophy of self-enjoyment. This is not a theory, it is a fact; how many feel it!" And then the higher

nature of this young girl bursts forth—this child cast on such a stormy and wild ocean of life. "No," she continues, "I will not attempt to fathom the depths of materialism. I have prayed to Heaven to save me when standing on the brink of uncertainty; when I have been carried away by the excitement of my youth, by these festal scenes, adorned with roses and flowers, through which I have had to pass. All this charm, beauty, and seeming glory of life, what effect must it not have produced on a mind so excitable as my own."

The distaste for the duties of a Sovereign was of rapid growth in Christine's mind; it arose in part from her desire to be emancipated from all control, and partly from the comparison which she drew between the French character and that of her own subjects, little favourable to the latter. What she most disliked, was the habit of intemperance of the Swedes, whom she contrasted with a nation whose high cultivation had produced a Condé, and which was inspired by the author of the Cid.

In one of her letters she writes: "The Swedes are brave; but in France courage is combined with a gaiety, a gallantry, a politeness peculiar to all the nobility; even their Civil Wars are not waged without noble and brilliant characteristics; those of the League and Fronde were animated by chivalrous and worthy sentiments; foes on the battle-field, they never forget the amenities and courtesies of life, which mitigate the horrors of war. Yes," she continues, "having passed my earliest years in the midst of camps, I should have desired, like Madame de Longueville, to have thrown myself into intellectual discussions, which, by elevating the heart, might have led to great and noble deeds."

Such being the Queen's sentiments, every fashion and everything French were bid welcome by her—usages of society, social habits, forms of etiquette, however opposed to the Swedish character, were adopted at Court. The Minister saw this with the deepest regret. The Queen did not conceal from him that the one desire of her life was to inhabit Paris. The

North, with its bitter climate, "where winter barricades the realms of frost," was repugnant to her. Oxenstiern an earnest patriot, looked with alarm at this anti-national spirit, and it was with deep regret he observed a gradual change in the feelings of the population; it was no longer the young and graceful Queen whom they obeyed, but the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus.

Notwithstanding the opposition of the Grand Chancellor, and the great body of the nobles, the Queen obstinately pursued her own course. French customs and fashions continued to prevail at the Court of Christine. The simplicity of the Swedish aristocracy was replaced by a lavish extravagance that alarmed all the "grave and reverend Seigneurs" of the North. Heavy loans were contracted to defray this increased expenditure, and yet the Queen maintained her ground against the expostulations and representations of her Ministers.

"Chamberlains," she said, "after all, cost less than great generals, and hunting-parties were cheaper than military expeditions."

She resolved, that as the last reign had been devoted to the glory of the arms of Sweden, hers should be rendered famous by its social development. Whatever may have been the views of her own Counsellors, her policy obtained the approval of all the great European Courts. She was regarded as a most enlightened Sovereign; and during the wars of the Fronde, on several occasions, the Queen's arbitration was requested. Mazarin, the Queen-Mother of France, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, from time to time addressed to her most flattering letters. Christine, in one of her replies to Mademoiselle, thus expresses herself.

"You, Mademoiselle, are, in my opinion, the one personage who maintains the glory of our sex; you are a living evidence that our age is not behind other ages in producing prodigies.

"It is sufficient to render it equally illustrious with former times that it has given birth to a Condé, and such a Princess as yourself; the

virtues of that great Commander equal those of any former age. Indeed, I doubt if any General can be compared to him.

"For my part, I who pride myself on appreciating heroic qualities, I confess that your own have charmed me. I thought, at one time, my affection for you was incapable of being rendered more intense, but I am now undeceived, and I must change my expression, because my former sentiments were feeble and worthless in comparison with those which I now possess. It is no longer simple affection, but love and admiration.

"Mademoiselle, ma cousine,
"Votre très-affectionnée
"et acquise cousine et amie,
"CHRISTINE."

CHAPTER II.

IT was in 1651 that the Queen's distaste for all State affairs first expressed itself in a distinct desire to abdicate; she could not be persuaded even to sign any papers, and in the presence of her cousin and nearest relative, Prince Charles Gustavus, she declared that she regarded all her Ministers as persecutors and enemies. Her secret wishes were soon noised about, for she was not one of those who followed the advice of the poet of her own nation.

"Tell to one friend the secret thoughts
That in your bosom flow,
But tell the tale to one besides
And all the world shall know."

The Queen possessed many friends and confi-

dantes, and the result was not unfrequently very disagreeable to her, and injurious to her interests. At the idea of her abdication all the foreign courts were in a state of excitement, she received letters and counsel from all sides, but the Queen states that the only sincere reply that she made to her expostulants, was that which she addressed to the French Ambassador,

"Sir,

"I have on a former occasion informed you of the reasons which induce me to persist in my intention of abdicating; you are aware that this is no new idea, but that I have entertained it for eight years.

"During this long period, no change of circumstances has led to any change of my intentions, all my actions and plans have been regulated towards this end, and at this hour I am prepared to play out my part, and retire from this theatre. I care nothing for the plaudits. I know that a few persons will judge me favourably, and that you are one of them, as for all

the others they will appreciate my conduct according to their own views or humours, for I have refrained from showing my inner life except to yourself, and one other friend, who possesses a soul great and faithful enough to judge me truly.

"Those who estimate action according to established maxims will of course blame it; with such I shall not trouble myself to discuss the matter, and my future solitude will be too much occupied for me to remember them. I shall employ myself in examining my past life, in correcting my errors, however little I may lament them. I shall resign without regret that which I have governed with indifference, and I shall be in safety, and secure from the vicissitudes of fortune, and exchange a life of servitude for one of freedom.

"Yes, I feel assured that I shall secure my happiness; I do not fear that Providence with which you threaten me. I shall employ what is given me of life in familiarising myself with noble thoughts, in looking with compassion from my harbour of

refuge on all those who are tossed about on the stormy waves of public life.

"Wherever I may be, or whatever my destiny, I shall ever retain my friendship for you, and I trust that no change may affect your feelings of regard which I am honoured in possessing, and that I shall ever be

"Your affectionate,

"CHRISTINE.

"28th February, 1654."

This determination to abdicate was not dictated by any vision of quiet domestic life, that life "de l'obscurité du foyer domestique qui ne laisse à l'homme ni le désir de perdre, ni de recommencer sa vie;" for never was a sovereign except our own Queen Elizabeth, with so many aspirants to share her throne, the two Princes of Denmark, Frederic and Ulric; Frederick William of Brandenburg, Don John of Austria, Philip of Spain, but above all the Prince Palatine, Charles Gustavus, all in turn aspired for her hand, but the latter was the only one of

all the number for whom the Queen had any affection; but her aversion to any marriage, (although she spoke of it as *le lien charmant*), her determination to remain single, was not to be overcome even by this sentiment. In vain did the Prince plead the sentiment of their childhood; when she offered him a high military command, he replied in highflown language, that if he accepted the sword from her beloved hand it would be with the intention of piercing his own heart. In vain the Queen strove to arouse his ambition, "Forget," she exclaimed, "in objects worthier of you, our childish feelings; when a great future is presented to the mind, is it well to dwell only in the past? it pleases you to live on memories. Oh, heavens! rise superior to these puerile ideas, go and inscribe your name in the pages of history, that you may leave a noble memory to posterity."

The Prince was in no way satisfied by these arguments.

"When I no longer value my life," he exclaimed passionately, "how can I care for pos-

terity? I see now before me a long vista of years without happiness, and you console me by a picture of an imaginary hereafter. I am indifferent to history, all I now ask is to be left in peace."

"Gustave," the Queen replied, "if it will render you happier, I swear not to marry, if ever I do marry, until I am much older; then we will reconsider the matter, but I can give you little hope."

"May I at least—"

"No, listen, cast aside your romantic notions, let us be serious. Do you wish the throne? You may be satisfied, and this sooner than you anticipate. Is it love? Can you not be satisfied in possessing so large a part in my heart, to know that if I ever married I should choose you, as I prefer you to any other."

"I accept the command then," said the Prince, "but only to exile myself for ever from the Court; unless you change your resolution, your army will be my banishment."

So the Prince departed, and the Queen by her own admission passed through that painful

period which follows the absence of a loved object, and at one moment she was on the point of recalling him to the Court, and thus changing the destinies of the kingdom. Resolute as was her nature, she learnt that the most powerful sovereignty is that of the affections, and that as soon as a sympathy is declared everything tends to strengthen it, all things turn to its profit, absence or presence, action or inaction, enthusiasm or indifference. Queen as she was, and bold by nature, Christine was not exempt from all those passions, sentiments, and emotions which spring from and are associated with intenseness of feeling.

It was soon after the departure of the Prince that the States, ignorant of this love-parting, met and resolved to petition the Queen to choose a husband. With her wonted energy, Christine summoned them at once to the palace, and anticipated their intended address. In her speech she declared her repugnance to marriage, and that she did not know how this could ever be overcome, and she added:

"I do not the less admit that the safety of

the State requires a recognised successor; this will relieve my subjects from all apprehensions as to the future; I name my cousin, the Prince Charles, as possessing all the qualities fit for a sovereign."

The Senate were taken by surprise; they expressed their readiness to accept Prince Charles as their King if the Queen would marry him. Strange to say this readiness on their part, this anticipation of her secret wishes irritated her, and she distinctly refused to do so.

They urged that by the decrees of the kingdom the sovereign was obliged to marry.

"No one will ever make me marry against my will," said the Queen, "no power on earth or in heaven shall compel me. I do not say what I may do if the Prince is named as my successor; I intend to have my own way."

"Your Majesty shall, but the Senate cannot deviate from constitutional practice."

"It is a matter of indifference to me, no argument will make me change my mind; if I ever marry it will be the Prince Charles. This I

assure you on my word, but I repeat I have no intention of marrying, I have not yet been crowned."

"May the States deliberate on this matter before Your Majesty's coronation?"

"Not a word; I won't have it discussed. I do not wish gossipping people to talk of me; after my coronation we may think over the matter."

"All Europe will be surprised at Your Majesty's determination."

"I care nothing for the opinion of Europe, people will soon have something else to engage their attention." This was the Queen's final reply.

And the Queen triumphed; when this conversation was reported, the three orders were convoked; and they yielded. The Chancellor Oxenstiern had to admit, with the utmost reluctance, himself conquered by the Queen's energy, and Prince Charles was nominated her successor, in the event of the failure of a direct heir.

"Those who applaud now," said the great statesman, "will weep later; what consoles me,"

he added, "is that at my age I shall not live to see the ruin of Sweden."

And when the Act of Succession was signed, the hereditary Prince returned, and the Queen was happy in the presence of one to whom she was deeply attached. The Prince possessed that soft melancholy of expression which appeals like a poem to a woman; two sentiments filled his heart, gratitude for this great favour, for the grandeur of his future, and regret at the Queen's persistence in her refnsal to permit him to share her lot. All the foreign Courts expressed their congratulations that the succession to the throne of Gustavus Adolphus was secured, and many sovereigns sent the Prince their highest orders of chivalry. Among others, England sent the Garter; but all these, by the Queen's command, were returned; she would permit no one of her subjects to accept a foreign decoration, expressing this resolution in her usual language—

"Mes moutons ne doivent pas être marqués d'une main étrangère."

CHAPTER IV.

THIS intention to abdicate on the part of the Queen, the intense love of retirement, was overpowered for some time by the glow and excitement of the coronation. She was carried away and absorbed by the enthusiasm for grandeur, as she so lately had been by the poetic vision of the charms of a simple and tranquil life. In after-years, recalling her impressions of these days of excitement, she writes:

"Give me back—give me back the days of my youth; the days of my illusions. Give me back all my earnestness, with its attendant misery, if you will; all my agitations, my ungovernable wishes; these were accompanied,

it is true, by bitter regrets, by sleepless nights, but I enjoyed life. Without excitement, without anxieties—what is life but a tomb?"

"Not so!" philosophy exclaims; "calm of mind, well-regulated temper, moderate desires, in these happiness is found." "Oh, mockery! I have listened to all these maxims; and I know they are false. I desired to feel, to know, to taste of everything. Yes! even of this miserable philosophy which only deceives us by endeavouring to destroy the energy of our lives.

"Radiant with youth, with power, and full of hopes of the future—with what delight I have plunged in the midst of fêtes? Intoxicated with joy, I have tasted every pleasure.* I delighted in these grand ceremonials. Until then, my royalty had been secluded in the palace. Now, in the presence of the nation, all my feelings and views seemed developed. These crowds, these acclamations, these vivats, filled my heart with rapture. It was a new life to me; I delighted to influence men's minds. Had I been a man, I should have sighed for conquest and the battle-field.

* After the coronation.

Now my objects can only be peaceful ones. Alas! in the very midst of this great excitement a shudder would pass over me. I calculated how long it would last; and I felt that it would too soon be succeeded by indifference, *ennui*, and even disgust."

Oxenstiern and her Ministers had wisely determined, with the view of interesting the young Queen, and realising to her mind the greatness of her position, to make the coronation as magnificent as possible; and hoped by awakening her ambition, to arouse her from the lethargy in which she was plunged. Everything was done that could appeal to her imagination. Never had the States appeared in greater pomp and grandeur than on the occasion of the coronation of the young and beautiful Queen. Embassies from all foreign Courts added their dignity and grace to the magnificence of the pageant. Heralds and trumpeters preceded the procession of Gentlemen, Senators, Marshals, and Princes. Grouped around these were all the dignitaries of the kingdom. The Prince Palatine, the proclaimed heir, Charles Gustavus,

was seated at the Queen's side, he who had attained the height of success in honours and in love.

It is recorded "how the paternal benediction of the Archbishop was so beautiful and solemn that it thrilled through every heart of that vast assemblage; and when the noble strains of the organ echoed through the Cathedral aisles, it seemed as if Mount Sinai had been transplanted to Sweden." Then the Herald proclaimed "La très-puissante Reine Christine est couronnée, et personne autre."

Four perfectly white horses drew the state carriage, while the grandees of the realm were followed by numerous pages in gorgeous attire, scattering gold and silver amongst the people.

The Coronation was succeeded by a magnificent banquet. The old northern nature seemed to thaw under the warmth of the general excitement. Generous aspirations, flattering eulogies, joyous predictions—all were calculated to render this a glorious day in Swedish Annals; and yet such was Christine's nature that when the bright scene closed, when the festal lights were

extinguished, and the halls deserted, she sought the solitude of her apartment to lament her fate. That very night she wrote: "Grandeur, fêtes, pomp, splendour, what is it all to end in; the pageant has swept by, I shall see it not again."

Nor was this frame of mind transient. The Queen after her coronation fell into a state of moral depression, and many days after she expresses herself in the same manner: "The height of power seems to me the height of misery! Why is my life to be at the disposal of my subjects, and to be wasted for their happiness. Let us live for ourselves; surely it is far better to be a humble peasant with no anxiety but for himself and his family. To live entirely for others—what a magnificent servitude? No, the crown oppresses my forehead. I must remove it.

"And what is my compensation for all these honours and grandeur. I have enjoyed them, and find only bitterness—that most bitter of all bitterness which follows on satiety. Where are the dreams of my childhood? Where are

the hopes of my inexperienced happy youth? And all these festivities, when I reflect they are paid out of the scanty pittances of the poor, that my vanity has been flattered at the cost of their sufferings—then I am miserable."

Besides these melancholy reflections, to which the Queen added a romantic nature and an imaginary love of seclusion; there were other motives which influenced her; she possessed a great taste for the Fine Arts and Science. Her desire was to travel, France and Italy seemed regions of bliss unattainable to her. She dreamed of many countries, rich in classic associations; her favourite studies always carried her mind away to those lands which she pictured to herself ever bright as Summer. To her ardent temperament the cold, hard, congenial North was unbearable, and the monotony of its life too dearly bought even by a crown.

Again the Queen communicated her desire to abdicate to her cousin, Prince Charles Gustavus.

The reply of the Prince was most kind and

affectionate; but he implored her to reconsider her decision; and in private he urged all the well wishers of Sweden, the great dignitaries of the Kingdom and the Senate, to induce the Queen to retain the Crown.

On the 25th of October, 1651, the Queen summoned the Senate, and informed it of her intention to abdicate and retire into private life.

"After mature reflection," said Her Majesty, "I feel well assured that I shall best consult the happiness and welfare of the nation, who desire to see the succession to the throne established, by at once placing the Crown on the head of my successor. Resolved never to marry, I shall declare the hereditary Prince your Sovereign, and his children will hereafter relieve the country from the anxieties which are ever attendant on the election of a Sovereign."

The Senate and the States-General were thrown into the greatest consternation; the Prince Charles declined to accept the throne during the Queen's life; the Chancellor, in the

name of the Senate, declared that the country would be utterly ruined by the Queen's abdication; all the great Officers of State threatened to retire; Oxenstiern even threw himself at the Queen's feet, and embraced them with fervour; and all the assemblage wept as they implored her to reconsider her decision, and the Queen was herself overcome. She at last yielded again to the earnest entreaties of her Council, so far as to consent to postpone her resolution, and the affectionate thanks she received from all parts of her dominions, for the time satisfied a heart so eager for emotions.

To compensate herself for this sacrifice, the young Queen now plunged into a vortex of pleasure and excitement. Fête succeeded fête; races, ballets of the most extravagant description, occupied and diverted her mind, they gratified the ardent youth which surrounded her, while they alarmed her prudent counsellors. She carried the same earnestness into all her occupations and interests. When Descartes arrived at Stockholm, the Queen passed five hours

a day in abstract studies. He drew out with her the plan of a great University, for she wished to attract to the North all the rising talent of Europe. A Queen who passed hours together in studying Tacitus and Herodotus, was capable of appreciating those who were associating their names with the revival of letters.

But all this time the project of abdication was only adjourned. It had seized on the young Queen's mind, and no considerations could eradicate it. The very conversation of the celebrated men who thronged to her Court made her more anxious to seek a life of retirement, of study and contemplation. She resolved, however, to keep her own secret until all opposition would be useless. The courtiers, however, did not see without uneasiness the courts of the palace crowded with luggage addressed to the private residence of the Queen at Gottenburg. Besides, she began to lavish honours on those she preferred; she created a number of Senators, and her conversation betrayed that some great project was on the eve of being

announced. The whole kingdom was agitated, and Christine found the moment had arrived when, if she hoped for a quiet succession to her inheritance, she must declare her intention.

The Senate was for the third time convoked, but the Queen now addressed them in a different tone. Their advice was no longer asked for, or even their approval sought. In a few firm and decided sentences, she announced her intention to abdicate.

The Queen then summoned Charles Gustavus, in order that she might make final arrangements with him. It must be said she well considered her own interests. When a sagacious counsellor remarked "that she would take with her such a large share of intellectual wealth," she replied that at the same time it would be wise to combine this with worldly wealth, which was only despised in pastoral verses; besides, she added :—

"I desire the power of conferring blessings and benefits around me. What a privilege to possess the means of changing in one moment

the fortunes of an unhappy man, of bringing joy and hope to troubled spirits. There are pleasures which never tire, and this is the only one of the attributes of royalty which I shall regret."

In this spirit the Queen made great demands on the State revenues. She required the property of the Islands of Öland, Gothland and Ösel, Wollin and Usedom; the town and the Château of Volgates, and part of Pomerania. Altogether the Queen's requirements amounted to a large proportion of the revenues of the country; but her ascendancy was so great that the Senate could not resist them. They were, however, firm in their determination only to give her a life interest in all these properties. The Queen, to her mortification, perceived the first indication of the change which follows on self-abandonment.

This great and interesting event, although not of Imperial interest like the abdication of Charles V., was still very remarkable. A young and beautiful Queen, at an age when ambition generally exercises so large an influence on

character; proud of her illustrious origin, and of the important place which so small a kingdom filled in Europe; to whose Court not only the gay and brilliant courtiers, but so many personages distinguished in science and letters thronged; a Sovereign who had at so early an age been regarded, if not with esteem, with wonder and interest by great Sovereigns and their Ministers;—that such a Queen, so gifted, popular, brilliant, and powerful, should at an age when others are only starting in life's race, determine to retire into comparative obscurity, could not fail to give rise to the most extraordinary conjectures; and until the irrevocable words were uttered, her counsellors might well anticipate her mind would again change, and still hope that this resolution was the result of a temporary excitement, and never seriously entertained. In this they were mistaken.

In the curious, ancient town of Upsal, not far from the splendid cathedral, rises an old tower, which stands on a precipitous rock and overlooks the wide vale. Within its walls is

performed the ceremony of the coronation and the burial of kings. It teaches a lesson on the vanity of human greatness, when the throne of the living is placed in the centre of the tombs of the dead. As Christine was about to die to royalty, she desired that the last event of her public life should be accompanied with the same dramatic effect as all the other incidents of her life, and that the States should on this solemn occasion be summoned to meet in the Great Hall of the venerable edifice.

The touching grandeur of this solemn event attracted to Upsal not only all the magnates, but the population of the surrounding country; and it was in tearful silence and in the attitude of deep respect, and almost awe, that the crowd saw the procession wind up the mountain side, escorting a Sovereign who was, they superstitiously feared, about to bid farewell not only to the throne, but perhaps to life. In their simplicity they were unable to imagine that she would survive this great act of self-sacrifice.

When she entered the Hall, the great dig-

nitaries ranged themselves as at a coronation on either side of the throne. For the last time the Royal robes were to be worn. She took the sceptre in her right hand, and the orb of gold in her left, preceded by the Grand-Master with the Sword of State, and the Grand-Treasurer bearing the Golden Key. The Chancellor Oxenstiern, mourning over the sad failure of all hopes of the descent of the Crown in the family of the great Gustavus Adolphus, stood by her side, and next to him the Hereditary Prince, in a few moments to become her Sovereign.

The deed of abdication was read by the Chancellor with a faltering voice; by this deed all her subjects were absolved from their allegiance to her person. Then the Count of Brahé, who was selected to remove the crown and the Royal robes, approached; but at the last instant he declared his inability to do so painful an act. The Queen was compelled to take the crown from her own head, and placed it in his hand; she then took off her magnificent mantle and gave it to the nearest of her suite; it was im-

mediately torn into shreds, and pieces of it were handed down as heir-looms in families.

It was then seen that the Queen wore beneath her gorgeous robes a simple white dress as at her first communion, when on the threshold of life, she had won the hearts of all. She stepped to the edge of the dais, and there uttered words full of earnestness and simple eloquence. The solemnity of the occasion, the touching proofs of love and regard of which at this supreme moment of her life she was the object, all combined to affect her to tears, and sympathetic sobs were heard throughout the vast assemblage. At the close of her speech, the no longer Queen turned towards the Prince Charles Gustavus and thus addressed him.

"You, Prince, are about to ascend the throne of the most illustrious sovereigns. I need not recall all their glorious deeds, for they are recorded in the history of the kingdom; I am animated by the conviction that I am confiding the destinies of a people I so much love, to a great and noble Prince; and that is my only consideration in naming you as my successor. I

am not influenced by our relationship, or even by the affection I bear you, for these should have no weight where the great interests of the State are involved. I give over to you a flourishing State, able and faithful ministers, a loyal and attached people; and for all this which Providence permits me to offer you, I only make two demands on your gratitude—namely, to protect and pay all respect to my mother, and to regard my people with a paternal solicitude, a people than whom none were ever more loyal and devoted, whose affection has sustained me in all my difficulties, and who have religiously kept their oaths of allegiance, from which oaths I now relieve them."

Charles Gustavus made a simple and dignified reply, and then the oath of allegiance to the new Sovereign was taken. Swords were unsheathed and raised to heaven, one cry of "*I swear!*" pealed through the air. Prince Charles ascended the throne the Queen had so lately occupied, and the first to proffer her allegiance to the new Sovereign was his subject Christine.

CHAPTER IV.

THE morning of this great solemnity had been bright and clear; but before its conclusion dark masses of clouds portended a storm, but no weather could induce Christine to remain at Upsal; she declared that all the snows of the North should not detain her. Her one idea was to flee from that frozen corner of the North, from those dreary banks of sand, and bleak rocks covered with melancholy pines; to escape from this people whom she professed so greatly to love, and yet whom at moments she would speak of as ignorant, drunken rustics. The sun of France and Italy, the civilization of the South, this is what she longed for, and it was to attain this that she had abdicated.

Christine's first intention had been to make a sea voyage, and a fleet of twelve sail was collected to escort her; but she suddenly changed her mind, for the only reason, she alleged, that she wished to satisfy herself of her new independence by changing her mind on the slightest pretence; she determined to be, as she expressed it, "libre comme l'air." She herself admits that her nature was as inconstant and capricious as the wind. In her journal she describes with delight her journey and first impressions; as she left the arid sands, the wide uncultivated plains, far behind her. For the last time she travelled through vast pine forests, over almost trackless moorlands and through wild ravines, and she passed by villages rarely disturbed by a Royal progress; nor had the excitement of her new freedom diminished when she approached the frontier of Denmark.

Here, to avoid the curiosity of those who she feared might interfere with the incognito she was so anxious to maintain, she determined to disguise herself, and to divide her suite into different parties. On the third

day they stopped at an hotel, where she dined with some of her ladies, with nothing to denote any difference of rank. With her usual recklessness she amused herself with ridiculing the manners of the people, and with drawing unfavourable comparisons between them and her own countrymen, asking the attendants many unusual questions respecting the Royal Family. She did not remark that they all replied with the greatest reserve, with the exception of one who, standing in front of the Queen's chair, kept her eyes fixed upon her. She was dressed in the picturesque costume of the country, a grey short petticoat, the borders and pockets embroidered with red, a corsage of the same colour with silver buttons. The peasant girl seemed absorbed in every word that fell from the Royal lips; but the Queen paid her no attention, and continued to express her opinion, not only of the country, but of the people and all the principal personages of the Court.

After dinner the Royal cortége started again. When a few leagues from the town one of the

royal pages galloped up, his couutenance expressing the greatest anxiety and alarm; he stated that after having started, a messenger arrived, commanding him to return immediately to the hotel, where the Queen of Denmark desired his attendance. When he was ushered into her presence, Her Majesty desired him to tell his mistress that she did not do justice to the King of Denmark, nor to the character of the people he governed, and that it was to be hoped when the Queen was better acquainted with them she would know how unfounded her prejudices were.

The Queen could not understand one word of this message, until she learned that the peasant girl who had stood before her chair and listened to every word, was the Queen of Denmark herself; who, hearing that her sister-sovereign was passing through her kingdom in disguise, had determined to avail herself of the same mode of discovering the real character of this remarkable daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, who could resign the grandeur of a throne for the sake of a life of philosophic retirement. It may be

well imagined that this abdication, and the originality of character it showed, filled all Europe with interest and astonishment. Poets wrote, and minstrels sang in her praise.

> " Ainsi dans le fond de son âme,
> D'une divine ardeur sentant vivre la flamme;
> Le soleil des esprits fait pour les éclairer,
> Répandait ses rayons, commença sa carrière,
> Remplit les cœurs de feux, les esprits de lumière,

But in truth the whole secret of her abdication was the love of excitement; this determined her life, and governed her subsequent chequered existence. She herself said, in after-years, she had passed through every diversity of life, through scenes and events that never could be effaced from her memory—her coronation, abdication, abjuration, and expatriation; through emotions enough to have filled up many lives.

"Yes," she exclaims, "I have experienced nearly every sensation, I have anticipated every emotion that could break the monotony of my existence. It seemed ever to my mind that

annihilation was preferable to that insipid monotony that so many endure and call life; there is no life without movement and excitement; tranquillity, repose, settled habits, the absence of emotions—in fact perfect rest, all this is only vegetation, and who shall say that even the tree does not experience more enjoyment when its branches sway in the storm and it shakes to the ground its withered leaves, than when in days of calm its lofty top, stands motionless against the blue sky.

"How I feel for those unhappy beings doomed to measure out cloth, and at the same time their existence, and who only exchange the wooden cradle for the wooden coffin! Poor creature, has he existed half a century measuring cloth? Why should he regret life? ages will sweep over his tomb, but he will have no yard measure in his hand—this the only difference.

"I am in the presence of my God, I speak the truth and care nothing for the opinion of others.

"I changed my religion. I have repudiated my early faith. But, O my God, I render thee

thanks, that after all the follies and errors of my disturbed life, I am at last driven to Thy breast.

"Yes, I found our religion, that religion for which my father bled, was cold and ungenial as our climate; such was my disposition that friends from a Southern clime drew me towards the Catholic communion; besides, must I admit it, there was a certain desire to render myself remarkable. God, who acts in unknown ways, made use of my love of singularity to turn my thoughts to Himself, and through that vanity unacknowledged then by myself, to become the centre of interest to the whole Catholic world."

But the Queen's abjuration of that faith so dear to Sweden was, when known in that country, attended by lamentable results; the shock killed her mother, whom the Grand Chancellor Oxenstiern survived only a few days; then it was that even Christine's wilful nature was subdued; she retired into a wild solitude, from which for weeks no one could withdraw her. The châlet she inhabited in the neighbour-

hood of Brussels, was small and desolate; there she wandered amid the orchards and woodlands, mourning the irrevocable past, and meditating on the future, and that future, if she could have foretold it, was one to be regarded with anxiety and dread. She was a great example of how dangerous it is to indulge in any deviation from the natural course of life. As Queen of Sweden, with her great natural abilities, she might have conferred blessings on a generous free-hearted people, and left a noble memory behind her; she exchanged a life of honour and glory for that of a world wanderer, a peaceful existence for one of wild excitement, and a name that was becoming glorious in the annals of the nation for one associated in history with a dark and terrible deed. It is on the crime committed in the royal palace of Fontainebleau that the historian of Queen Christine's life must dwell. Until this deed of guilt, Christine had never been accused of cruelty. The tragedy of Fontainebleau gave a shock to opinion throughout Europe, and aroused a universal sentiment

of public indignation, and even Louis XIV., anxious as he was to save a Queen and his guest from the consequences of her unpitying vengeance, was compelled publicly to protest against Christine's flagrant violation of all the rights of hospitality and of public law.

CHAPTER V.

IT was in the Autumn of 1657 that Christine arrived at Fontainebleau intending to proceed to Paris, when she received a letter from Cardinal Mazarin, conveying, in respectful terms, the desire of the King that she should, for the present, remain there, and that the palace was entirely at her disposal. The Queen's indignation was great, she had not left Rome and the delights of Southern Italy to be detained, as it were, a prisoner, in a palace, however magnificent, or wide and beautiful the demesne. She wrote to the Cardinal Minister in most violent terms; but his reply, expressed in very courteous language, assigned as a reason that arrangements to give her a suitable reception

in the capital were not sufficiently matured. All the reports the Cardinal had received of the Queen's meddling conduct in Rome, indeed in every Court where she had resided, made him advise Louis XIV. not to allow her to dwell within the precincts of the Tuileries.

Whatever the characteristics of the French Court, it was a model of grandeur and dignity, and the extravagancies of the ex-Queen were not likely to prove agreeable to a circle where the greatest etiquette and dignified manners prevailed; added to which, since her abdication, as she could not occupy herself with Swedish politics, she amused herself with political intrigues.

The ex-Queen had passed through Paris on her way to Rome, and her first short visit had not been a successful one. She had outraged many prejudices, and wounded many susceptibilities. For a time, she seemed to be acquiring an influence over the King which Mazarin regarded with uneasiness; and he resolved, on this second occasion, to keep her

as much at a distance as he could, consistently with ordinary courtesy. But if the Queen was not allowed to approach the capital nearer than Fontainebleau, in that palace she was received with every possible consideration; in all respects she was treated as a Sovereign, and her large suite delighted in all the pleasures that so luxurious an abode and the surrounding forest could afford.

Among the suite was a man of remarkable distinction, named Monaldeschi, who had long been the confidential friend and adviser of the Queen, and had formed one of her retinue in Italy. It was under his guidance she had visited the beauties of those sunny southern climes. The acquaintance commenced in this wise. The Queen was detained by some accident, at a small village in the Romagna, when suddenly Monaldeschi, who resided at a château in the neighbourhood, presented himself. He was remarkable not only for his charm of manner, but for the keenness of his intelligence. During the delay required for the repair of the carriage, Christine accepted his hospitality

—to her imagination, Monaldeschi appeared the very type of a hero and poet. He was well read in the Italian Masters, and the tone in which he repeated their verse was worthy of the beauty of their expression. He was passionately attached to his native country, and acquainted with all its Art treasures.

The Queen thought how pleasant it would be to be guided in her travels and researches by so fascinating a companion, and Monaldeschi readily agreed to accompany her in her journey. The Queen, with her impetuosity of nature, was ever reckless of consequences. She never cared whom she offended, or how many prejudices she wounded. Monaldeschi was placed at once over the heads of all her Court. She made him Captain of her Guard, her chief secretary, her confidential adviser. This necessarily caused bitter offence to all those of her household who had shown their deep attachment by following her into exile, and who really were devoted to her person. Monaldeschi was not one of those who wear their

honours meekly. He was impetuous, authoritative, with a great sense of his own superiority, qualities which are rarely pardoned. A dangerous counsellor for a Queen so prodigal of her life, her genius, and the rare qualities with which she was endowed. Admirable as a cicerone, Monaldeschi was the person least fitted to possess the confidence of one who delighted in state-craft, and who carried her diplomatic interference into every Court she visited.

Athough the Queen resented what she chose to consider her exile at Fontainebleau, still, surrounded by her small circle of young and joyous friends, she had little cause to complain of dulness; every day there was some fresh excitement. A new ballet, a play, or a hunting party in the forest. The inventive genius of the Marquis Monaldeschi, the major-duomo, was never at fault; but there were higher occupations in which the Italian was useful to her. A man of great erudition, he was able to assist those studies in which she found so much pleasure. There was a valuable library in the palace, which origi-

nated with Charles V., many works were lost, or destroyed, during the reign of Charles VI.; but Francis I. had added to it the rich collection of Blois, made by the Princes of the House of Orleans; the Constable of Bourbon and Charles IX. still further enriched it; and although Henry IV. transferred a portion of it to the College of Clermont, it remained, in the reign of Louis XIV., the largest library in France. No one was more fitted to appreciate it than a Queen who, at the age of fifteen, had found her enjoyment in abstruse and classic studies.

This residence which she had, at the first, so much dreaded for its seclusion, became to Christine very agreeable. She delighted in the splendour and beauty of the palace, where the History of France and of Art may be traced in its architecture and in all its decorations. The wildest parts of the forest, every glade, valley, or hill-pass became known to her—she visited every retired spot with her ever faithful friends and companions by her side. She began to love her comparative solitude, and even to feel regret

when it was interrupted by those occasional visits which Mademoiselle de Montpensier, or the King himself from time to time paid her.

So, happily and tranquilly passed the Summer, and who that saw this gay Court could anticipate how shortly all its enjoyment was to be overclouded?

There was one of the Queen's household who from the first had taken a violent dislike to Monaldeschi; whose vanity, assumption, and arrogance were quite sufficient to create him numerous enemies, and Sentinelli found in the new Captain of the Queen's Guard a formidable rival. Until the appearance of the Marquis, Sentinelli had been the confidential adviser, the faithful friend and counsellor of the Queen. He now found he was entirely set aside, and he who as major-duomo was so recently the organiser of every party of pleasure, the supreme favourite and recipient of every state secret, found himself suddenly discarded, and compelled to receive instead of giving orders. All this was more than sufficient to excite his Italian brain, and

all his thoughts were directed towards vengeance for his supposed injuries.

Sentinelli had been sent to Rome on a special mission, where he was the constant guest of Cardinal Azzolino, one of those whom Monaldeschi had offended by his vain pretensions. One of the princely palaces where the Cardinal and Monaldeschi used to meet was Madame Guachard's, with whom the Cardinal was aware that Monaldeschi kept up a constant correspondence. One morning the Cardinal visited Madame Guachard's during her absence, he saw an open letter on the table in Monaldeschi's writing; he was unscrupulous enough to take it up, and perceived at one glance that the confidences of the Queen were revealed to Madame Guachard by Monaldeschi. He took the letter with him to show to Sentinelli, who saw with pleasure that his vengeance might soon be gratified. Madame Guachard's secretary wanted an office, which it was in the power of the Cardinal to obtain for him. This was a sufficient bribe, and the whole of Monaldeschi's correspondence was soon in the possession of his two enemies.

Certainly never were treachery and perfidy so great as Monaldeschi's. If ever there was a woman who committed herself to ill-considered opinions, and who gave utterance to bitter though brilliant criticisms, it was Christine; she had no concealment from her confident and friend, and the secrets of others entrusted to her were as little sacred as her own. Through Mademoiselle and others, she had managed to obtain much intimate knowledge of the inner life of the French Court, which she told to Monaldeschi, and which he in turn communicated to Madame Guachard. But even this breach of all political confidence was as nothing to what any woman must have felt, at finding herself held up to ridicule; her weakness and follies betrayed to another woman; her extravagances ruthlessly criticised; and, worst of all outrages, the last to be forgiven, her pretension to beauty scoffed at. Certainly, if ever there was a traitorous correspondence which was calculated to turn every feeling of interest and regard into deadliest hatred, it was that of Monaldeschi.

Sentinelli returned to Fontainebleau from Rome, to find the favourite and his rival more firmly rooted than ever in the good opinion of the Queen. His first object was to lull any suspicion of jealousy and ill-feeling on his part against Monaldeschi, and to make it appear to the Queen that his conduct was influenced entirely by disinterested motives when he denounced his perfidy.

The favourable moment presented itself. Sentinelli was sent for by the Queen to give her some information respecting his mission to Rome. After the business of the interview was concluded, she observed that he still lingered in the room, and that he appeared distressed and agitated. She inquired what was the cause of his emotion.

"I have a terrible secret in my heart, Your Majesty. I tremble to tell it, and yet I cannot endure to conceal from Your Majesty how cruelly you are treated."

"Cruelly treated by whom?"

"Must I say it? Yes, the name shall be uttered. Your Grand Chamberlain Monaldeschi."

"Take care how you calumniate such a man; jealousy of my regard is no excuse for outrage and calumny, nor shall it go unpunished."

"Ah, Your Majesty, I am not the accuser, he shall condemn himself; the outrage is great, the crime a terrible one. I will consent to forfeit my life if I do not prove my accusation."

"You surprise me. What does it all mean?"

"Can I rely on Your Majesty's self-command not to tear up these papers, when your just indignation is roused."

"What papers? let me see; it is the Chamberlain's writing. Whom are they addressed to?"

"Madame Guachard."

"Whom I knew at Rome?"

"The same, Your Majesty."

"Good heavens! is it possible? Why, words I have said I see repeated. I am mocked; turned into ridicule. It is impossible—it cannot be Monaldeschi! No man could be so base—so cruel. No, no, it is not Monaldeschi."

"Your Majesty knows the signature, and can see that there is no mistake."

"The traitor! the villain! And you have read them?"

"Yes, I was under the necessity of doing so for Your Majesty's protection. Would to God I alone had read them."

"What! you tell me that these letters have been circulated in Rome?"

"Before they came into my possession, since then I have considered them sacred; but they were previously shown to the Cardinal Azzolino."

"Worse and worse! infamy heaped on infamy. I am insulted, held up to ridicule in Rome. My State secrets betrnyed. Ah! he shall die. Yes, he shall pay the forfeit of his crime. You have seen, Sentinelli, how I loaded him with benefits. What unexampled treachery, villainy, and wickedness! He ought to die."

"Will Your Majesty permit me to have the letters copied before they are shown him, as he might destroy them?"

"Yes; but copy them yourself—let no one see them."

"Your Majesty will resolve not to say

anything to the Marquis until my work is completed."

"Yes! Yes! but he must die. Sentinelli, can I depend on you?"

"My duty is in all things to obey Your Majesty.

"Then you must desire Landini, Ostrachi, and one other to be in readiness."

"Your Majesty may rely on their fidelity. Your Majesty has determined he is to die?"

"What, do you think I will be so ill-treated—so reviled—and let the traducer live to repeat his infamy? Send for a priest, that he may be confessed."

Sentinelli departed to copy his letters, and left Christine in a state of terrible agitation. She threw herself on a sofa and burst into tears. Here was an end of her dreams of friendship, of truth, of loyalty, of faith—all, all had vanished. "Oh, how far better," she then felt, "to have remained on her throne, beloved by her people, than to have sought in retirement for that tranquillity—that peace—that sympathy she had ever desired—

dreamed of. She, a queen — a woman — the laughing-stock of those men who were wont to admire her superior intelligence; it was insufferable." Her brain seemed on fire. The room she sat in opened on the beautiful garden which was redolent of charm. It was the garden of the Fontaine-bleau which gave its name to the palace; a perfect creation of Francis I., Italian in its taste, like the architecture and painting within, the "jardin délectable," to use the expression of Bernard Palissy. Le Nôtre had but recently been adding fresh terraces to it, and repeating on a smaller scale the wonders of Versailles. Even on this November day all was still. No sound save of the rippling of the water through marble fountains, ever flowing limpid and clear, an emblem of what life should be in its purity and freshness, as it resembles life in the rapidity and continuity of its fall.

The Queen passed two hours in this retirement while Sentinelli was copying the letters. The stillness, the loneliness did not produce the effect that might have been expected, of recalling her to thoughts worthier of a woman

and a Queen. Before leaving the room she had sent to summon Monaldeschi to her presence, but he could not be found. By a contradiction of mind, she almost hoped that he might have left the Palace; but, alas, it was not so. He was only hunting in the forest, and his rival Sentinelli was well resolved that he should never again cross his path.

When the Queen returned to her apartment, she found Sentinelli, and with him the Père Lebel, Prior of the Mathurins of Fontainebleau.

"My Father," said the Queen, "follow me; I wish to speak to you in secret."

"I shall obey Your Majesty."

"My Father, I will entrust you with a terrible secret. I wish to show you these letters, written by a man in whom I placed all my confidence. Does not such a man deserve to die?"

The Prior replied, "Violent passions are evil counsellors, Your Majesty; if you take time to consider the wrong done, your better feelings may prevail."

"Ah! my Father, it is impossible to forgive this outrage—this base ingratitude. But you shall read the letters; I give them you to read. I will promise you not to take any steps until your return. You will judge for yourself if treason could be deeper."

"I will obey Your Majesty. I will take the letters, and accept Your Majesty's assurance that nothing will take place until my return to-morrow."

"Not to-morrow, to-night; I insist on to-night."

"Queen, I will obey you; but reflect that Sovereigns are God's Vice-Regents on earth, and that God commands us to forgive our enemies."

The Prior retired, and soon after Monaldeschi returned from hunting. The Queen ordered his immediate attendance, and he appeared without giving himself time to change his hunting-dress.

The moment he entered the Queen said, "You see in me, Marquis, a victim of the most odious—the vilest treachery."

"What, Your Majesty betrayed? Is it that, not content with detaining you here, Mazarin"—

"No, the traitor is of my own house. He is one I have loaded with favours."

"What, Sentinelli! I should not be surprised, Your Majesty, he may pretend to despise your goodness."

"Despise is not the word."

"His fault must then be very great."

"Indeed, a most fearful outrage. What do you think a man merits who is the betrayer of my every confidence; who utters foul calumnies against me; who distils leprous poison into the ears of others? What merits the man who insults his Benefactor, Friend, and Queen, and renders her the object of his vile calumnies and of his bitterest ridicule?"

"What does he deserve?"

"Yes."

"I repeat, if Sentinelli has thus calumniated Your Majesty, he should be punished by—"

"Death."

"Yes, if he has really committed this crime—by death."

"It is well you have pronounced his sentence."

"I am prepared to serve Your Majesty. This arm—"

"Against whom would you direct it?"

"Your look is fixed on me, Your Majesty. Is it not the Count de Sentinelli who has committed this offence?"

"Yes, draw your sword. Do justice on yourself; for you deserve it. Die by your own hand, if you do not die of shame. Do you see these letters, perfidious man? Read them."

"But, Queen, these are not in my handwriting."

"Have you not written such letters?"

"No, never; it is a falsehood—a calumny. Whoever has attached my name to these has forged it. How could Your Majesty credit such infamy?"

"Villain! if I show you the letters in your own handwriting. These are copies."

"Then, Your Majesty, let me see these letters. I may in a moment of exaltation, writing to my

friends, have expressed more than I intended; but never have I been unworthy of the regard Your Majesty has honoured me with, and which can never be effaced from my memory."

"Be silent, miserable man; the evidence of your infamy is in my possession, and you die."

And the Queen left Monaldeschi alone.

CHAPTER V.

IT was in the beautiful Galerie des Cerfs that the Queen again summoned the Father Lebel to meet her, after he had terminated the perusal of the letters. The spot was ill chosen for the tragedy that was to follow; for on it the taste of Francis I. had been lavished, and all the masters of decorative art — Rosso, Primatice, Nicolo dell' Abbate — had furnished it with graceful and beautiful works; while the exquisite forms of Benvenuto Cellini filled the deep recesses. This gallery had been especially associated with scenes of gaiety and festal banquets. There had been no melancholy histories connected with Fontainebleau; it was the abode of light, of love, and enjoyment. Well might Monaldeschi fail to

realize that any hand, however reckless, would dare to stain with blood the scene of the glories of France, and associated with the most illustrious names.

It was therefore with the utmost confidence in his powers of persuasion that he met the Queen again.

When he entered, he saw Sentinelli, Landini and Ostrachi with their swords unsheathed, standing at the end of the gallery.

The Queen was walking in the centre, and was in a state of violent agitation. When she saw him she exclaimed, "So you are come, vile traitor!"

Monaldeschi made no attempt at defence, but knelt at her feet and asked for mercy.

"Queen," said the Prior, placing himself between the armed men and Monaldeschi. "Queen, I beseech you to stop. No doubt the Marquis is guilty; but—"

"But! well, what excuse can be made for this villainy?"

"Leave him time to make his peace with God, and during that time more merciful views may

penetrate your heart, and you may not have to reproach yourself with a terrible crime."

"Oh, Queen," cried Monaldeschi, "listen to me only, I pray you listen to my justification."

"Well, then I consent, perfidious as you are; I will listen—sheathe your swords again. My Father, you will see that I precipitate nothing, and give to this traitor all the time he requires to justify himself if he can do so."

Monaldeschi had nothing to say in his excuse, the facts were flagrant, his own letters were his accusers; all he could do was to implore for mercy.

"I will," he cried, "if you please, become an exile myself from the world; I will live amongst the savages of the new world, my name shall never be heard again, only let me live," and he fell again at the Queen's feet.

"Queen, you must have mercy!" exclaimed the Prior.

Christine remained inexorable; only uttering the words, "He shall die," and left the gallery.

Sentinelli and the others then approached him, with their swords drawn, and exhorted

the Marquis to confess himself to the Prior, as he had only a few moments to live. At his prayers and supplications Ostrachi, who from the first had most reluctantly joined Sentinelli and Landrini in this crime, said he would go to the Queen and see if he could appease her wrath. The others consented; but he returned in a few minutes, the tears in his eyes, to say that all efforts were useless.

Sentinelli desired the men to advance.

It was then that the Prior interfered with the authority of the Church. "You are," he said, "about to commit a fearful murder. I refuse to confess and absolve him until I again appeal to the Queen, I warn you not to touch him until my return—a man not in a state of grace."

The Prior found the Queen in a state of terrible agitation.

"Madame," said the Prior, "Madame, by the sufferings of our Saviour, by His precious wounds, by His passion, have mercy on this unhappy man."

"Prior, criminals have been broken on the wheel for less."

"Madame, it is not from pity for him, it is for your Majesty's own sake; does Your Majesty consider you are dwelling in the Palace of the Kings of France, you cannot violate the sanctity of the Palace and of hospitality, the King will never pardon it."

"I am a Sovereign still, Prior, I have authority over my own subjects. I am not a prisoner in this palace, other sovereigns have acted as I am about to do."

"Madame, pardon me, they were in their own territory.

"Prior, you irritate me."

"Madame, it concerns your own honour and reputation; at least give the Marquis a fair trial."

"A trial, Prior! What have all my letters produced, a traitor such as this? A fair trial? Never! never! Prior, leave me," and the Queen almost pushed him from her apartment.

The Prior returned to the gallery and told the unhappy man, who was weeping bitterly, there was no hope. He made his confession in

French, in Latin, and Italian, as well as his sobs would permit; then Sentinelli approached and said,

"Leave us, Prior, this is the end, he must die."

The Prior retired from the gallery, the doors were closed, there was a struggle, a wild cry followed by a deathlike stillness; the brilliant, gay, accomplished but evil-hearted man, had ceased to live.

He was buried in the Church of Avon at the extremity of the park. His tomb, his coat of mail, the stain on the floor of the gorgeous gallery, are still shown as records of this terrible historic drama.

APPENDIX.

THE following letter, which the Queen wrote to Mazarin after the death of Monaldeschi, will shew the indignation with which this terrible crime was regarded by the Court of France, and her extraordinary exaltation of character.

"Monseigneur le Cardinal,

"Ceux qui vous ont appris le détail de la mort de Monaldeschi, mon Grand Ecuyer, étaient très-mal informés.

"Votre procédé, tout fou qu'il est, ne devroit point m'étonner, mais je n'aurais jamais cru que ni vous, ni votre jeune maître, eussiez osé m'en témoigner le moindre ressentiment.

" Apprenez tous, tant que vous êtes valets et maîtres, petits et grands, qu'il m'a plu d'agir ainsi; que je ne dois, ni ne veux rendre compte de mes actions à qui-que-ce soit, et surtout à vous

" Vous jouez un singulier personnage pour un homme de votre rang! Quelques raisons qui vous aient déterminé à m'écrire, je fais trop peu de cas pour m'en occuper un seul instant. Je veux que vous sachiez, et que vous disiez à qui voudra l'entendre, que Christine se soucie peu de votre Cour, et encore moins de vous; et que pour me venger je n'ai pas besoin de récourir à votre formidable puissance.

" Sachez, Monsieur le Cardinal, que Christine est Reine partout où elle est, et qu'en quelque lieu qu'il lui plaise d'habiter, les hommes quelques fourbes qu'ils soient, vaudront encore mieux que vous et vos affidés.

" Le Prince de Condé avait bien raison de s'écrier, quand vous le détenez inhumainement à Vincennes, ' ce vieux Renard qui jusqu'ici à trompé Dieu et Diable, ne se lassera jamais d'outrager les bons serviteurs de l'Etat.'

"Croyez moi, Jules, comportez-vous de manière à mériter ma bienveillance. C'est à quoi vous ne sauriez trop vous étudier.

"Dieu vous préserve d'aventurer jamais le moindre propos indiscret sur ma personne. J'ai des amis et des courtisans à mon service, qui sont aussi adroits, aussi surveillants que les vôtres, quoique moins bien surdoyés.

"CHRISTINE.

"Fontainebleau, ce 19 Novembre, 1657."

Maxims of Queen Christine, collected in a work entitled, "L'Ouvrage de Loisir."

La vie ressemble à une belle musique qui charme, qui plait, et ne dure peu.

Tout passe comme un éclair, le bien et le mal dure si peu, qu'ils ne méritent pas qu'on s'en réjouisse, ni qu'on s'en fache.

Ceux qui profitent de tout, sont sages et heureux.

Les Princes ridicules sont fait pour faire rire et pleurer les gens.

L'on est plus sensible aux maux de ce monde qu'à ses biens.

On peut rendre tous les malheurs glorieux, quelques grands qu'ils puissent être.

Les mépris vengent noblement un grand cœur.

Quand on est faible on ne peut, et quand on est puissant on ne doit se venger.

C'est sur les sympathies et les antipathies que la raison à perdu ses droits.

Les sots sont plus à craindre que les méchans.

Il y a des occasions où les grands hommes pleurent sans se faire tort.

Les hommes ne seraient ni traîtres, ni menteurs, s'ils n'étaient pas faibles.

On s'éfforce en vain de paraître ce qu'on n'est pas.

Les arrêts de sa propre conscience sont irrévocables.

L'ingratitude ne doit pas empêcher de faire du bien.

On aime ceux à qui l'on a fait du bien; on haït ceux à qui l'on a fait du mal.

Les gens qui se divertissent trop s'ennuient.

Les hommes ne sont pas faits pour les plaisirs, mais les plaisirs sont fait pour les hommes.

Ce n'est pas sans raison que la nature a donné des épines aux roses.

Tout ce qui ne rend pas l'homme plus sage, plus fort, ni plus heureux, est inutile.

Les fanfarons sont rarement braves, et les braves sont rarement fanfarons.

Les grands hommes et les sots font quelquefois les mêmes choses, mais ils les font d'une manière différente.

THE CHATEAU OF VINCENNES.

CHAPTER I.

IT was almost on the eve of that Revolution by which the old monarchy of France was overthrown, and which, even at the present hour, after ninety years, influences her destinies, that a striking scene was witnessed in the Parliament of Paris. On the same day three generations of the royal house of Bourbon—the Princes of Condé—took their seats in the august assembly: the stately Prince de Condé, princely in his manner as in his birth; his son, the Duke of Bourbon, and his grandson, Louis-Antoine-Henri de Bourbon, Duke d'Enghien. On the previous day, the youngest of these princes of the blood had been received as a knight of the Order of the Saint Esprit. He had just attained his fourteenth year, having been born in 1772; he was on this

occasion greeted with loud acclamations, for his bearing and his general appearance were worthy of his illustrious race. He wore the ancient and picturesque costume of the knights of the Order: the vest of white satin, with the rich purple velvet cloak, the magnificent gold collar and jewel of the order. It was a picture which the painter would love to dwell on, and wish to record. The ladies of that bright Court, where the approval of ladies was decisive of merit, pronounced his bearing to be worthy of the princely House, which sprang from, and which had rivalled the race of kings; they traced in his countenance a resemblance with the well-known portrait of the Count d'Enghien de Cerizolles, whom De Guast had promised to present as a prisoner to the ladies of Milan—as the youngest of the house of Condé, the future destinies of the race of these great captains depended on this life. He had already given proofs that he was not wanting in the military instincts of his family—of a family who had given so many heroes to France; and he bore a name much cherished in the hearts of the people.

Standing on the steps of the throne, and not occupying the throne itself, the Condés had not been the objects of envious ambitions, of suspicions and rivalries; for men may hope to usurp a throne, but cannot usurp the glories and honours of a race. The name of Condé was never pronounced but with respect and affection, and so on this occasion not only within the walls of the Parliament, but without, all classes greeted with acclamation, and covered with their welcome as with flowers, the young Prince on this his first public appearance, who concentrated in his person the graceful and courtly qualities which distinguished the nobility of France.

The Duke d'Enghien was born at the Château of Chantilly, on the 2nd of August, 1772; his father was Joseph, Duke of Bourbon; his mother, Louise-Thérèse-Mathilde of Orléans. His birth was attended by a series of unfortunate incidents, which were regarded at the time as ill omens for the future. His mother lay on the verge of death; the child was so weak that he had to be wrapped in linen steeped in spirits of wine; a spark caught the linen, and the infant

was with difficulty rescued from a terrible fate. During his boyhood, his life was constantly imperilled from his recklessness of danger. The Count of Virieu and the celebrated Abbé Millot were his tutors; the former undertook his education in all the manly exercises which develop the body, and call forth its energies; to the latter was entrusted the conduct of his studies, and both these instructors faithfully performed their duties.

It was said of the princely race of Condé, "C'était la plus belle que la France a vue briller à la tête de ses armées—la branche de laurier de la France." Predestined to glory, for three centuries this illustrious line, conspicuous in French history for noble and illustrious deeds, were the ardent defenders of that monarchy to which they were so nearly allied. Nor had there been wanting to their lives the illustrations of great misfortunes. The name of Condé rose into greatness and splendour with the House of Bourbon, and as it shared its glory, so it partook of its adversity down to its last final calamity, when the murder of the youngest of the princes of the Bourbon race,

was the closing scene of the terrible deeds of the French Revolution.

It was on the 17th July, three days after the fall of the Bastille, that the Duke d'Enghien followed his family into exile. An army of emigrants was rapidly concentrated on the banks of the Rhine.* History has justly condemned the

* L'erreur des émigrés fut de compter sur les puissances étrangères pour rétablir en France l'ancien ordre des choses renversé par la Révolution, ce fut de croire à la générosité et désinteressement de nations souvent ennemies, et toujours jalouses. L'exemple de Louis XIV. prenant en main la cause des Stuarts aurait dû régler la conduite des Princes de l'Europe; si, comprenant leurs véritables intérêts, ils avaient ouvert les yeux aux dangers dont ils étaient entourés. Mais au prologue de ce drame qui va bouleverser le monde, et changer toutes les existences, les rois et les ministres n'en soupçonnèrent pas les mystérieuses et sanglantes péripéties, ils y assistèrent en se réjouissant à part de l'affaiblissement que les troubles intérieures devaient faire subir à la monarchie française. La coalition cherchait moins à sauver Louis XVI. qu'à humilier la France, et la réduire au rang de puissance déchue. Les hésitations de Leopold VI.; les secours intéressés de François VI.; les tergiversations du Roi de Prusse; les vaniteux et superbes dédains des petits Princes allemands; la morgue insolente des généraux, l'arrogance des officiers in-

conduct of the great French nobility in their endeavours to conquer the revolution from without, rather than from within. It cannot be doubted that by remaining near the throne, instead of endeavouring to enlist the sympathies of foreigners in the royal cause, they would have encouraged the weak and desponding, while they would have deprived the anarchists of their most powerful popular cry, when they denounced the nobles for conspiring with the foreign enemies of France; but the French nobility were greater in active than in passive courage. They weakly imagined that all Europe would be in arms for the ancient dynasty; that they would re-enter France as the vanguard of a powerful army. It has been well styled, " une faute glorieuse, une heroïque folie."

férieurs, tout découlait du même principe. C'était un parti pris de fouler aux pieds la France trop long-temps triomphante. Si un Prince d'Allemagne pouvait se vanter de n'avoir jamais donné un verre d'eau à un émigré, si un autre interdisait certaines routes de ses états aux juifs, aux vagabonds, et aux émigrés, on ne s'étonnera pas d'entendre le Prince de Condé se plaindre de la barbarie de ses soi-disants alliés, et le Duc de Berri avouer que les Autrichiens lui faisaient mal au cœur.

The little army of emigrants was not successful, and they found themselves betrayed by those whose great desire was the humiliation of France, who had to be forgiven her centuries of glory.

The campaign of 1793 added to the glories of the House of Condé, the corps of the Duke of Bourbon had been disbanded; the Duke, with the Duke d'Enghien, joined the army of the Prince de Condé; and during the campaign the young Prince evinced all the calm courage and readiness of a veteran. On the 2nd December, at the battle of Bertsheim, he won by his courage the admiration even of the enemy. The Prince of Condé carried the village at the point of the bayonet. The Duke of Bourbon and the Prince commanded the cavalry. The former was severely wounded and had to retire, leaving the young Prince in this responsible post, when he won the confidence of all who served under him by his distinguished bravery; he was in 1796 created a knight of St. Louis, and from this same year dated his tender atttachment for the Princess Charlotte de Rohan-Rochefort, the innocent cause

of his sad fate, and to whom he was secretly married in September, 1797.* In 1795 the Duke of Bourbon left the army for England, little thinking that he was bidding his son a last farewell. In 1796 the Prince of Condé conferred on his grandson the command of the advanced guard. The campaigns of 1796 and 1797 were carried on with varied success, when a suspension of arms condemned him to inaction. The emigrant army was again enrolled in 1798, but only for a very short period, and the peace of Luné-

* The Notice Historique, published in 1804, " A l'ouverture de la campagne de 1794, le Duc d'Enghien fut fait Chevalier de St. Louis; c'est vers cette époque que l'ordre chronologique des faits place le commencement de sa passion pour la Princesse Charlotte de Rohan-Rochefort, du moins les lettres qui furent saisies lors de l'arrestation du Duc ne donnent pas une date plus ancienne depuis cette époque jusqu'au tombeau; il lui a été toujours attaché, elle seule lui a retenu à Ettenheim, elle seule fut l'innocente cause d'une si horrible catastrophe. Mais elle est la plus à plaindre, elle lui a survécu. Mille fois plus heureuse si le même coup l'avait réuni à un Prince si digne d'elle. Ils furent unis secrètement, et bien des indices pourraient nous faire présumer que ce fut en Septembre, 1797, au moment du départ pour la Russie.

ville frustrated all their hopes, when the small and gallant force of these companions in arms and misfortunes parted to meet no more. Great errors had been committed, a calm and prudent policy had been subordinated to a love of glory and excitement, of heroism and self-devotion; valour and intrepidity emigrated with them. For these gallant gentlemen the life of the camp was more inspiring than the weary watchings in a city, occupied by an excited populace. To fight for the Monarchy seemed preferable to attempt its maintainance by passive endurance, and it must be granted that the emigrants under the command of the three generations of the House of Condé performed deeds worthy of their quarterings; they failed through the cold apathy and suspicion of their pretended allies; but there was no stain on the golden lilies borne on the escutcheons of these gallant princes,

> "Though it is grander, mightier to succeed,
> Yet it is worthy for a cause to bleed."

And no nobler blood was ever shed for a

nobler cause since the earliest annals of France.

After the peace of Lunéville, the Prince de Condé followed his son, the Duke de Bourbon, to England. The Duc d'Enghien asked permission of the Cardinal de Rohan (so famous by the affair of the Collier de la Reine) to reside at Ettenheim, one of the possessions of the ancient Archbishopric of Strasburg.

CHAPTER II.

ETTENHEIM is a small town in the Duchy of Baden, situated between the Black Forest and the Rhine, about twenty leagues from Carlsruhe. On the death of the Cardinal Rohan, the Duc d'Enghien was allowed by the Elector of Baden to continue to make it his residence. The house, which the Prince inhabited stood in a small park outside the village; the approach to it was through a narrow avenue of melancholy poplars. A fruit garden and orchard were at the back. In front the grass, unenlivened by flowers and much neglected, gave a melancholy aspect to the place, the whole of which was surrounded by a wall covered with ivy and moss. A small sheet of water, from

which a shallow stream flowed into the little river Ullenbach, failed to remove the expression of desolation which the aspect of this residence conveyed; for some houses and localities have a sinister appearance, and predispose the mind to depressing thoughts. From the terrace, the Prince could watch the rapid Rhine as it rolled between him and the land he loved so well. On the other side were the dark masses of the Black Forest which extended into the far horizon. Altogether, it was an abode which few in the fulness of youth and happiness would have chosen; but the Duc d'Enghien at that early age was old in experience and regrets. Devoted to his country, he found himself exiled from it, and it was a melancholy satisfaction to gaze even at the ramparts of Strasburg, and recall the stirring events of the last twelve years of his life.

There was yet another source of interest at Ettenheim. Within the Black Forest itself, at five leagues' distance, resided the one person, the deep affection for whom was the guiding principle of his life, and was predestined to destroy it. For reasons which have never been clearly

explained, the Duke's marriage in 1797 with the Princess Charlotte de Rohan was kept secret. The most probable cause was her relationship with the Cardinal de Rohan. Ever since the lamentable affair of the *collier*, and the Cardinal's weakness and vanity, which was attended with such painful consequence to Marie Antoinette, and cast so much discredit on the royal cause, the name of Rohan was abhorrent to the Princes of the House of Bourbon. To neither his father nor grandfather did the Duc d'Enghien venture to announce his affection, much less his marriage to the niece of the House on which the Cardinal's conduct had cast such a shadow. All the descriptions of the Princess vie in commendations of her meekness, gentleness, and grace, and the effect she produced on the heart of the young Prince was not only instantaneous, but permanent, but it never prevented him charging at the head of his troops, nor did it weaken his patriotic feelings. He might have said, like the Cavalier,

> "I should not love thee, dear, so much
> Loved I not honour more."

When however the gallant little army was disbanded, all his thoughts were centred in the spot where the object of his affections dwelt. The very secrecy he had imposed on himself tended to strengthen his feelings, for it added a romantic interest to the engrossing passion of his life. His time was passed in visits to that picturesque château in which the Princess resided. Shortly before the terrible catastrophe, he writes on his return from one of his expeditions.—

"It was supposed that I passed the last three days boar-hunting in the forest. How little did they imagine that those days I was blessed with your society, enjoying all the delight of your presence, and caring little for the wild boars or stags of the Black Forest. Oh, my loved friend, why cannot my whole life be devoted to you? Why, in order to fulfil the duties of my birth and station, have I had so frequently to tear myself from you, and I may again be compelled to do so, and to leave that abode of love and happiness where I forget the tribulations and anxieties of my chequered existence."

Most unhappily it was the very mystery by

which these long absences were clouded, which aroused the suspicion of those spies who surrounded the First Consul, and whose zeal was stimulated by high rewards.

Bonaparte having crushed Republicanism, as he had no intention of playing the part of Monk, his next object was to destroy all interest in the Bourbons, or, if necessary, to strike down the family itself. Every tale, however improbable, that cast suspicion on any member of the royal family was eagerly accepted. The residence of a young, energetic, popular Prince too near the frontier, gave rise to rumours in the vicinity, which were at once communicated to Paris, while his mysterious journeyings wére not unnaturally associated with designs against the Consulargovernment.

It was also to be regretted that during many of his excursions he thought it desirable to change his name. He frequently travelled under the title of the Count of Saint Maur. On one occasion he visited the town of Coire, which a French regiment had just left. One officer, named Peiquier, remained behind, who was

delighted to welcome a young officer. They dined at the same hotel, and the next morning after breakfast the Prince bade him a cordial farewell, expressing the hope that some day they might meet again.

"I hope so," replied the officer, saluting the Prince respectfully, "provided we do not meet at the Bridge of Orenburg."

It was the officer who had made an unsuccessful attack on this post, where the Prince commanded, thus proving to him that his incognito could not be maintained, and this justified the uneasiness often felt by the officers of his household.

This establishment was not originally a large one, but it gradually assumed the proportions of a small Court. It was composed of the Marquis de Tumery, the Colonel Baron de Grunstein, Lieutenant Schmidt, the Abbé Wembroun, l'Abbé Michel and his secretary, of a confidential servant named Jacques, and three upper servants, Ferrand, Poulain, and Canone. In his own circle, and, indeed, throughout the neighbourhood, the Prince was much beloved.

His income was large, and his charities extended far and wide; no case of distress was ever in vain submitted to him. Many of the emigrants of old family were in great straits, and the demands on the Prince were innumerable, but all his gifts were bestowed with a delicacy which rendered them more precious.

On one occasion the Chevalier de Rosoland was reported to be lying dangerously ill at Offembourg, and in a destitute state; the Prince at once visited him, and on taking his leave he took down a small engraving which represented the passage of the Rhine by Louis XIV., and told the old officer it was one of a series of engravings of which he possessed the others at Ettenheim, and he showed so much interest in it that the old officer asked if he might presume to offer it to his Highness.

"I accept it with pleasure," replied the Prince, "but since you are so kind to me, I hope you will let me enjoy a similar gratification. You tell me how much pleasure the acceptance of your offer has given you. I happen to have a small sum by me, with which I intended this

morning to have made a purchase. I find the object is sold, and you must relieve me of this purse," and he placed a hundred louis in his hand.

The officer's eyes filled with tears of gratitude.

"Come, come," said the Prince, seizing his hand with effusion, "soldiers should have all things in common—their pains, their pleasures, their purses, and their swords. My happiness in exile is to live with my old friends and comrades as if we were one family."

And truly he did so, and not only the friends of his exile, but all who were in sorrow and distress, for many a league round, fouud their claims for relief and compassion allowed at Ettenheim. By all these his incognito on his various excursions, and the secret of his marriage with the Princess, so shrewdly surmised, was respected; but the Prince in his journeys was very imprudent; he sometimes even crossed the frontier and made excursions into France, and was occasionally seen at the Strasburg Theatre. This recklessness, as the ambitious projects of

the First Consul became more clear, alarmed the Prince's friends, and he received from all sides counsels to be more careful. The Duke de Bourbon wrote to him:—*

"Remember you are very near France; take care and neglect no precaution to be warned in time, so as to leave your present residence, if you do not think it a safe one, in case the First Consul should order your arrest. There is no courage in braving danger. All the world would blame you for any imprudence, which might be attended with terrible consequences. I repeat, take care of yourself, and pray give me the assurance that you will do so, so that this anxiety may be relieved."

The fears of the Duke were only too well founded; the more so as the Prince did not discontinue his excursions. Although he assured his friends that he took every precaution not to be surprised, it is certain that there was a great

* M. Thiers says: "Le grand-père et le père des Condés étaient à Londres; le Duc d'Enghien dans le pays de Bade; tous trois au service de la Grande-Bretagne. Ils avaient reçu ordre de se tenir prêts à recommencer la guerre."

uneasiness in the little Court of Ettenheim, which was communicated to the Princess de Rohan, who endeavoured to persuade the Prince to leave Ettenheim for some more distant and safer residence, or, at all events, never to move unless accompanied by faithful friends. But the presentiments and forebodings of others failed to impress the Prince. Although the sunset of his life was drawing near, no mystical lore imbued his spirit. There was much cause for the anxiety of his friends; and from time to time there were indications of danger, which only the greatest, infatuation or the blindness of affection prevented him seeing.

One evening in the month of February, 1804, a stranger was seen walking up and down before the Prince's residence; after some time he entered the small hotel of the Soleil d'Or, and inquired after an old soldier called Stohe, who formerly resided in that neighbourhood, and he appeared annoyed when he was told that he had left. During his conversation with the innkeeper, the name of the Duc d'Enghien was mentioned; the stranger immediately asked for

information as to the Prince's habits; the number of his establishment, the names of his visitors, and he wrote down the replies of his gossipping host, until at last he remarked the curiosity of the stranger, and he excused himself for a moment, while he went to fetch Jacques to confront him; on his return the man had left, and no trace could be found of him.

This gave rise to much gossip and uneasiness; the more so as only a fortnight afterwards, while Féron one of the Prince's valets was watering the flowers in the balcony, two men passed by the narrow street leading to the Church of Ettenheim. One of these two Féron recognised as Stohe, whom the stranger had inquired for. They made signs to each other, and Féron, who withdrew from the window, observed that they were sketching the plan of the house. Féron ran for Carrone, and they moved from window to window, observing the strangers as they walked round the house.

Carrone knew the other stranger as a gendarme whom he had frequently met at Strasburg. He ran to warn the Prince,

who was strolling in the park; he returned to the château to find that the two visitors had taken their departure. Even after this, it was with difficulty that the Prince could be persuaded to place patrols round the house at night, and by degrees as the sense of security returned, even this precaution was neglected.

CHAPTER III.

IT was in the month of February, 1804, Buonaparte had commenced the fifth year of his Consulate, and it may be added the fifth year of great and noble works. It must be granted that his genius, triumphing over all the obstacles to improvement which democracy put in his way, was gradually leading the nation to a degree of prosperity unknown for many years. It was while his mind was full of projects of conquest, not only in the battle-field, but in the works of civilisation, that through the activity of the police several conspiracies were brought to light. We learn from Count Ségur, who was especially attached to the service and the person of the First Consul, that at one

time an ambuscade was posted on the way to Malmaison, another time a mine was dug under the road to Saint Cloud; on one occasion a block of marble was placed over the door leading to the orangery at Saint Cloud, which would crush the first person who opened it; at night-fall men of sinister aspect armed with daggers were frequently arrested prowling about in the neighbourhood of the Palace.

But the conspiracy which was the cause of that fatal deed which has darkened for ever the conqueror's fame, and which no glory, however bright its rays, can illumine, was that conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal. That great Chouan chief was landed in 1803 on the coast of France; and it was sufficient that he disembarked from an English ship, for the First Consul to assume that the Government of Mr. Pitt was a party to all the intrigues and plots against his life; he attributed their origin to the Royalists, and assumed they were promoted by the emigrants. Georges, Moreau, and Pichegru, were at once arrested; besides these principals, their accomplices, MM. de Polignac, de Rivière,

Lajolais, and many other persons of consideration were seized. A great number of persons of inferior position were at once condemned; the chiefs of the conspiracy, anxious to relieve themselves from the odium of an attempt to assassinate, declared their object to be a counter-revolution, and that they were expecting a Prince of the Blood to land on the coast of Béville, where Savary and his gendarmes was watching day after day; they watched in vain, no Prince arrived. Disappointed in his expectations, the First Consul turned his gaze towards the Rhine; there was the Duc d'Enghien residing at Ettenheim, constantly visiting Strasburg, and he had, it was assserted, secret and frequent conferences with Dumouriez: a terrible error in name and identity, for it was the General Thuméry, pronounced in German Thoumieriez and that the project was matured for the entrance of the Prince into Paris.

Such is the defence of the First Consul, supported by all those who are jealous of his reputation, who would if they could wash out the stain of innocent blood which has

tarnished his fame; but all impartial writers ascribe every step taken in this sad catastrophe to a predetermined policy. That there was a conspiracy, none can doubt, but it was impossible that for one moment the First Consul really believed that the Duc d'Enghien was a party to it, or that he ever visited Paris. There are accounts of mysterious meetings at which was present a personage supposed to be of importance, from the great consideration and respect with which he was treated, described as a young man with light hair, of a graceful presence and distinguished manners, at whose entrance everyone rose, and before whom even M. de Polignac and de Rivière remained standing; and the flatterers and sycophants, who guessed their master's wishes, pretended that this was the Duc d'Enghien, and anticipated his wishes when they urged the necessity of his arrest at Ettenheim.

Ségur, admirable historian, devoted to the Emperor, and by no means impartial, describes the agitation and irritation of the First Consul

at the reports he received respecting the Duc d'Enghien.

"How is this?" he exclaimed, turning to Réal, "why did you not inform me that the Duc d'Enghien is residing on the frontier; am I a dog to be knocked down in the streets? Are my would-be assassins to be treated with impunity? Why was I not informed that my enemies are crowding into Ettenheim? The time has arrived for me to give blow for blow, the head of the most guilty must fall."

The next day at the Council of State Buonaparte was still more explicit.

"Were I to be informed that some member of the Bourbon family was hid in the Hôtel of the Austrian Ambassador, does anyone imagine I would not drag him from his hiding place. Are we at Athens, where criminals could find shelter in the Temple of Minerva? When the Marquis of Bedmar conspired against the Republic of Venice, was he not arrested in his own palace? Did we respect the rights of nations at Vienna when we were insulted in the person of Bernadotte, our ambassador? Well

then, if I was well assured that any great personage conspiring against me was concealed by M. de Cobentzel, I would not only seize him, but the ambassador himself, both should be given over to the tribunals, and if found guilty they should be punished—yes, punished, executed!" he cried, raising his voice and striking the desk with both his hands. "Yes, executed."

There were numerous spies around Ettenheim. The Préfet of Strasburg, M. Shée, and General Laval, who commanded the military division. A German Jew was constantly prowling about the house. One day he announced to the General that on the previous evening there had arrived at Ettenheim, General Dumouriez.

It was the blunder in the name already alluded to; but on the receipt of this information the General Laval at once informed the police that the Duc d'Enghien was having interviews with General Dumouriez. This was sufficient. The First Consul at once ordered that an Inspector-General of Gendarmerie should be dispatched to report on the habits and conduct of the Prince, and of the officers who composed his

household. Not a moment was lost. This officer disguised himself at Strasburg and entered Ettenheim, and then returned to Strasburg to draw up his report. In that report it is stated that:—

"The Duc d'Enghien led a very mysterious existence; that he received at Offenburg a great number of emigrants; that he was frequently absent for ten or twelve days, and that it was reported in the neighbourhood he sometimes visited Paris."

This report communicated to the General commanding, Moncey, seemed so important, he resolved from excess of zeal to take it to Paris himself. A most unfortunate circumstance, as none of the statements were verified. On the General's arrival in Paris, he found the First Consul too predisposed to accept any denunciations, however improbable, and he burst forth into a fit of uncontrollable anger.

General Moncey was dismissed, and Réal again sent for. On entering the closet, he found the First Consul studying a large map, and measuring the distance between Ettenheim and Stras-

burg. He raised his head as Réal entered, and exclaimed in a sarcastic tone,

"Well, what have you to say now, able Chief of my Police? You know nothing of the conspiracy organizing on the frontier, or do you consider that because Ettenheim is four hours distant from Strasburg it is indifferent what occurs there?"

Réal replied that he was about to inform the First Consul that it was true the Duc d'Enghien resided at Ettenheim, and even received a certain number of friends there, but that he never visited Paris.

At this moment M. de Talleyrand entered.

"What is M. Marrias doing at Carlsruhe," said Buonaparte, "when there are conspiracies organizing at Ettenheim?"

On Talleyrand expressing entire ignorance on the subject, the irritation of the First Consul was augmented, and it was with an outburst of fury that he dismissed the Prince and Réal.

But, however great the indignation, real or affected, of Buonaparte, he was keenly aware that the position was a critical one. He could not

yet defy all international law. And to seize the Duc d'Enghien on neutral ground was too important a step to be taken without the advice of his Council. He came to Paris on the 10th March, and the same morning the Council was summoned. It consisted of his colleagues, M. de Talleyrand, Regnier, and Fouché, ex-minister of Police. Two questions were submitted to the Council—the one relating to the public safety, the other to diplomatic considerations. Talleyrand read a long report to prove the existence of intrigues and conspiracies on the frontier, and concluded with the proposition that the German neutrality and the territory of the Grand Duchy of Baden should be no obstacle to the Emperor seizing the Duc d'Enghien, and putting an end to the plots against the First Consul's life.

"Certainly," exclaimed Buonaparte, repeating M. de Talleyrand's last phrase, "we must put an end to all this, and the head of the guilty should fall."

"I trust, General," said Cambacérès, "if such a personage were in your power, you would not proceed to such extremities."

"What," said the First Consul, in a state of violent agitation. "I wish you to understand that I keep no terms with assassins."

He then rose and marched to and fro with rapid strides; but Cambacérès, in no way daunted, continued to insist on the impropriety of violating neutral territory, and seizing the Duke in a foreign country—admitting, at the same time, the justice of arresting him if he placed his foot on French soil. The First Consul became more and more indignant. He interrupted Cambacérès.

"You have suddenly become very jealous of Bourbon blood." And then elevating his voice, he requested the reports brought to Paris from Strasburg; "il s'étourdit par la sonorité de ses phrases," and persuaded himself by the very violence of his emotions, of the truth of the reports he had received as to the presence of the Duke at all the meetings held by Georges and the other conspirators. "Parbleu," he exclaimed, "it is easily calculated. It requires sixty hours to come from Ettenheim to Paris,

passing by the Rhine at Rhinau, and sixty hours to return, that makes five days; that leaves five days in Paris for the organization of conspiracies. Here is everything explained. The mysterious important stranger stands forth in the light, and the secret of all the meetings is unveiled."

A long discussion ensued, and afterwards the subservient Council agreed with their master, and the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien was decided. The First Consul retired to his cabinet, and there drew up the fatal instructions, which were immediately despatched to Berthier, the War minister. The orders were to send General Ordener by post to Strasburg, there to take three hundred dragoons of the 26th Regiment, quartered at Strasburg, and to surround Ettenheim; to seize the persons of the Duc d'Enghien, General Dumouriez, and their respective suites. Two hundred cavalry, under General Caulaincourt, were to arrest the Baroness of Reich at Offenburg, and to patrol the roads up to Ettenheim, so as to aid the operations of General Ordener. A courier was to be despatched to the First

Consul as soon as the arrest was accomplished.

On the receipt of these instructions, Berthier sent for General Ordener, a large sum in gold was remitted to him for purposes of bribery should force fail, and that evening the General left on his fatal mission.

M. Thiers says, "The question was solved in a blood-thirsty manner (d'une manière sanglante.) At the moment of this terrible sacrifice, the First Consul wished to be alone, he left on Palm Sunday for Malmaison, and walked up and down alone for hours together, affecting a calm which he had not at heart. The best proof of his agitation was his idleness, for he did not dictate one letter during his eight days' residence at Malmaison. Joséphine, who was aware of the projected arrest, burst into tears. The First Consul disliked tears, as he dreaded the effect upon his mind; he answered Madame Buonaparte with a tone which he endeavoured to render harsh, "You are a woman, and do not understand

political questions, your duty is to be silent."

The same day, Prince Talleyrand wrote to the Baron d'Edelsheim at Carlsruhe.

"Baron.—I had sent you a note, in which I suggested the expediency of arresting the French emigrants who are settled at Offenburg, for the First Consul learns that these emigrants have entered into the vilest conspiracies against his person; and it is with profound grief it has come to his knowledge that the Duc d'Enghien and General Dumouriez, both resident at Ettenheim, have afforded shelter to the worst enemies of France, and have been parties to most disgraceful conspiracies against the State and his person.

"Under these circumstances, the First Consul has judged it necessary, for his security, to order two small detachments of troops to be sent to Offenburg and Ettenheim, to arrest the instigators of these crimes, who, by their conduct, have placed themselves beyond the law of nations. General Caulain-

court is charged with this mission, and your Excellency may rest assured that, in fulfilling it, he will act with the utmost judgment and consideration."

This despatch was to be remitted to the French Minister at Baden at the moment the two detachments of troops passed the Rhine. Before, however, putting these instructions into execution, it was thought necessary again to reconnoitre the Prince's residence, and to learn what were his means of defence. Two officers in disguise were sent to Ettenheim, where they managed to extract all necessary information from the Prince's suite; on their return, there was another Council held at Strasburg, composed of General Ordener, the Colonels Caulaincourt and Charlot, Generals Deval and Fririon, M. de Shée, the Prefect of Strasburg, when it was decided to cross the Rhine that night.

CHAPTER IV.

ON the 16th of March, 1804, the forces under the orders of Ordener, Fririon, and Charlot, passed the frontier, violated the neutrality of Baden, and marched on Ettenheim. It was soon after midnight, when a large force having been posted so as to cover their return, that they moved on. Three small villages had to be traversed before Ettenheim was reached; the column marched in silence, but the tramp of the horses aroused the inhabitants, and many a window was opened, and the occupants wondered at the unwonted military display. At Ettenheim, where it was not possible to avoid the long, straggling approach to the

Prince's residence, the inhabitants, who for some time had heard vague rumours of danger to the Prince, to whom they were devoted, dressed themselves hastily, and inquired the meaning of this night march through the peaceful village. One of them appealed to Charlot, who was very anxious to prevent any agitation; had the people risen, the force was much too small to have accomplished its object. In reply to the question, Charlot assured the inquirer that it was an expedition undertaken with the approval of the Grand-Duke, that it was not intended to offer any violence to the Duke, or to interfere in any way with the townspeople, it was a mere measure of security and of police to obtain information on points of interest to France, and to the Duc d'Enghien himself.

While Charlot was speaking, the soldiers had arrived opposite the house. An officer and one troop of the gendarmes were stationed under the window which looked on the street, others scaled the wall at the back,

and formed a line in the court; another troop, acting on information they had received, surrounded the low wing, where the Prince resided with his two aides-de-camp and his numerous suite. There were fire-arms in each room, and the Prince kept a large sum in gold ready, in case of any emergency.

By this time it was five o'clock. The Prince, who had returned very late the previous evening from a hunting-party in the Schwarzwald, was fast asleep, when he was awakened by his valet, who rushed into his room in a state of extreme alarm, exclaiming,

"Prince! Prince! the French are here!"

The Duke rose, dressed himself, and in a few minutes had joined Colonel Gruenstein and the other officers of his household. It was an end room, and from the window on three sides they could see that the house was surrounded. The Duke and each of his suite seized a musket, the Prince from the

angle of his window saw the Commander Charlot.

If the Duke had fired, in the mêlée which would certainly have followed, he might easily have escaped into the forest. Charlot saw this, and exclaimed,

"You need not fire. I am in overwhelming force here, and resistance is useless."

Notwithstanding this menace, the Duke prepared to fire. Had he done so, a general combat would have commenced; the whole country would have been alarmed, and according to Charlot's opinion he would have been compelled to withdraw; but by one of those fatal impulses which determine the destinies of men and of nations, his aide-de-camp, Colonel Gruenstein, seized his arm and entreated him to pause; telling him that the house was surrounded, that he saw the flash of swords and bayonets all down the street, and the Prince, by resistance, would sacrifice all his suite as well as himself.

"You are right," said the Prince, "I may risk my own life; but I am not justified in

endangering the lives of others. Throw open the doors," he said to Carrone, his servant, "and let this outrage end."

The doors were opened, Generals Ordener and Fririon entered, followed by a number of officers and men; the gendarmes climbed the walls, and the garden as well as the court was filled with troops. Charlot approached the Duke and asked his name—the demand arose from the circumstance that they had no accurate description of the Duke, and he had put on the shooting dress which he wore the previous day, and with the exception of a princely presence there was nothing to indicate his rank. After this question, there was a pause; the generous devotion of anyone present might have saved the Prince. Baron Gruenstein, who had already so fatally interfered, was about to reply, when the Prince stepped forward and said:

"If you have orders to arrest the Duke d'Enghien, you ought to have his description."

" As no one will point out the Prince," replied the Colonel, " I arrest you all."

" Well then, I am the Duke d'Enghien," said the Prince, stepping forward towards General Fririon.

" Then, Sir, you are my prisoner," was the reply.

" I am not aware," continued the Duke, " on what pretence you arrest me, justification you can have none; but you are in force, and there is nothing more to say. As to you, Sir, turning to General Ordener, " you have not been ashamed to lend yourself to this shameful guet-à-pens."

" Prince," said the General with dignity, " a soldier obeys orders."

" A soldier does his duty," said Gruenstein, " but there are orders he should never obey."

" Silence, Sir," said Ordener.

" I will be silent," said Gruenstein, " but Europe will not be silent at this outrage; and the day may come when you will bitterly regret it."

At this moment an alarm was raised. The

instruction was not only to seize the Prince, but the General Dumouriez, and Charlot left the Prince to surround the house in which the General was supposed to reside. The first person he met was the chief-hunstman of the Grand-Duke of Baden, who denounced this violation of national independence. The cries increased, numbers of the inhabitants ran to the church, and the tocsin was sounded; the Commander of one of the detachments entered the church with the crowd and compelled the ringer to desist. Charlot endeavoured to appease the inhabitants, with the assurance that the Grand-Duke was cognizant of, and approved of the proceedings. On this many of the crowd withdrew. A general was arrested, but it was Tuméry, and not Dumouriez, according to Buonaparte; a fatal mistake of name, and of which he fully availed himself as an apology for his crime.

Charlot returned to the Prince, and commenced questioning Gruenstein, when the Duke said, "But for him you would have been a dead man, you owe to him your life. I had covered you with my musket." Then overwhelmed with

his misfortune, he preserved a strict silence; but when Charlot opened the drawers of his secrétaire to seize any papers, the Prince remarked with dignity.

"Sir, you are laying hands on the correspondence of a Bourbon, of a Prince of the blood of Henri IV.," and when he saw that the letters of the Princess de Rohan were also seized, he begged that the correspondence, which did not concern the Government, might be returned to him.

While these proceedings were going on, the gendarmes returned to announce that their search for Dumouriez had failed. Then the Prince said, "On the honour of a Prince, General Dumouriez has never been here. It is possible that he may have been arrested with instructions from His Majesty addressed to me; but I have not seen him, and am ignorant of his plans."

The prisoners, three in number, were then removed under a large escort to a windmill at a little distance from the town, where General Ordener had ordered the Burgomaster to

attend that he might formally identify the Prince and have the procès-verbal drawn up.

The Duke's faithful servant, Jacques, had frequently visited the mill; he heard that one of the doors opened on a narrow passage which led to the back entrance; he made a sign to the Prince.

"Open the door," he whispered, "be quick, you will find a plank placed across the tank at the end of the passage; having crossed it, throw the plank into the water, pass through the back entrance into the forest; and you will be saved."

The Prince went to the door, but it resisted all his efforts, one of the miller's children, who had been playing the preceding evening, had locked it. On such slight incidents do destinies depend.

This movement of the Duke had betrayed his intentions, and immediate orders were given to surround the suite.

All was now ready for the departure of the prisoners; together with the Prince were arrested the Generals Tuméry and Gruenstein,

Lieutenant Schneider, the two abbés, the Prince's secretary, and three servants. They passed through Ettenheim, and then were placed in a peasant's cart which was seized on the road. As the party advanced towards the river, one of the gendarmes drew near the Prince under the pretence of arranging the harness and whispered,

"As you pass the river, if you are a good swimmer, jump in, I will take care no one follows you; it is your only hope of escape."

The Prince had already conceived this idea. He was an excellent swimmer, and once landed on Baden territory, the slender force under Charlot would not have ventured to return; but every circumstance was against him, before they passed the bridge the cavalry were ordered to close round the cart, and this one chance of safety was lost.

On the French side of the Rhine a large body of cavalry was collected; when the Prince saw them he said to Charlot,

"It seems, Sir, that your government has

attached great importance to my arrest. You have the right of the strongest, your expedition was managed with great secresy; I am astonished you were able to surprise me in this manner, for I am, as you are aware, beloved at Ettenheim, you should never have taken me. Only yesterday the Princess of Rohan implored me not to return to Ettenheim, and in two days I was to leave my house. The Princess will follow me I am sure, she will never consent to be separated from me. When she does arrive, I trust to you, gentlemen, to treat her well."

At Neu Brisach a large force was under arms. Arrived at Phortzheim breakfast was ordered at the "Aigle Blanc;" afterwards the Prince entered a carriage with Charlot and an officer of the gendarmes, while another got on the box.

"Where are you taking me to?" asked the Duke.

"To Strasburg, my Prince."

"And then?"

"I am ignorant where after that," said Charlot.

It was half past five when the prisoner reached

Strasburg, and alighted at the Colonel's quarters, where he rested an hour. At seven o'clock he was conducted to the citadel, his friends and suite arrived shortly afterwards, and were placed in different parts of the castle. So unexpected had been the arrival that no beds were prepared, and mattresses were laid on the ground. As night set in, little as the Prince could imagine the extent of his danger, gloomy presentiments filled his mind; the silence of the guards, the measured tramp of the sentinels, was only broken by the wailings of a little greyhound which had followed the carriage all the way from Ettenheim, having been forgotten in the hurry of departure.

In his gloomy prison the Prince could hear the waves of the dark Rhine in its rapid flow, that river which separated him from liberty, safety, and above all from one with whom his every interest in life was blended. In desperation he appealed to Charlot, in the hope that he might gain his sympathy.

"What, Sir," he exclaimed, "in thus arrest-

ing a member of the family of your ancient Princes, have you no remorse?"

"Prince," said Charlot, "I act under orders."

"Yet," said the Prince, "the river is there, land me on the other side, and your fortune is secured."

"I must request Your Highness to desist," was the cold reply, and the Prince felt all hope of escape was at an end.

The Prince in his Journal describes his painful impressions; the scene of his loneliness was aggravated by his separation from Gruenstein.

"After dinner," he writes, "they removed Gruenstein to another room, and placed a guard of twelve soldiers at my door. I wrote to the Princess this morning. I sent it under cover to General Laval, and requested him to forward it by estafette."

The next morning, he continues, "the most extreme precautions are taken, and I am not permitted any communication with my friends. If this seclusion continues, I shall begin to despair. So early as half-past four

this morning, Colonel Charlot, accompanied by a commissaire, entered my room to ask for my papers. They tied them in separate bundles, and told me that they would all be sent to Paris; so I may be detained here for weeks, even for months. The more I reflect, the more miserable I feel; I am exhausted, and yet am unable to sleep. The Commandant of the Citadel, M. Machin, is very courteous and pleasant; he comes to visit and sit with me, and does his best to console me.

"Saturday 17th.—I cannot hear anything of my letter; I tremble for the health of the Princess—if only my note can relieve her anxiety. I am miserable. Officers have just made me sign a procès-verbal of the seizure of my papers. I am permitted to write a few lines of explanation, to testify that I have never taken part in any enterprise except legitimate warfare. This afternoon, I have been allowed to walk in the garden with the officer of the guard, and there I met my companions in misfortune.

"Sunday, 18th.—Was awakened at half-past one in the morning. Only allowed time to dress, and to bid farewell to my friends and servants. I was only accompanied by two officers of the gendarmerie, and two gendarmes. Colonel Charlot told me that I was to be taken to the General of Division, who had received his instructions from Paris; instead of which I was put into a post-carriage and six. Lieutenant Petermann sat by my side, the maréchal-de-loges got upon the front seat, with the gendarmes behind."

So it was, and the carriage rolled on towards Paris.

The Prince had been spared the pain of knowing that the Princess had come to the citadel, imploring permission of an interview with him, and, when thus unpityingly refused, anticipating his removal, she asked for a passport for Paris that she might see the First Consul; but the Prefect Schée, to whom Charlot had referred her, refused to let her pass the gates of the town. From the hotel where she lodged, she heard, in the middle of the night, the roll of

a carriage; she instinctively felt it was the Prince. She reached the window just as the carriage passed under it, and turned the corner; the sound of the receding wheels died away, and the stillness of the town was unbroken. What a cruel destiny that had separated hearts that loved so well—that bore through the darkness of night a young, and noble, and gifted life to an untimely fate. and left that other life blended with it to an even sadder doom.

CHAPTER V.

THE Château of Vincennes was not, at this date, used as a state prison; but had been permitted to fall into decay. A massive, gloomy pile it was, situated on the verge of the forest, and commanded the approach to one of the roads to the capital. A small military force was quartered in the fortress, commanded by a Governor named Harel, a devoted adherent of the First Consul's; he had been appointed to this post as a reward for his betrayal of Cerrachi, Demerville, and others, who were concerned in a plot against Buonaparte.

It was on the morning of the 20th of March that Harel sent for a labourer called

Bonnelet, and ordered him to dig in the outer ditch, a small trench from four to five feet deep. Bonnelet went for a pickaxe and spade, but a heavy rain prevented his completing his task. When Harel returned, after dinner, he bitterly reproached Bonnelet for his idleness, and threatened to dismiss him from his place. While he was in the ditch, urging on the work, a brigadier of gendarmerie, named Aufort, came to him in great haste.

"My Commander," he said, "I have been looking for you everywhere. An officer has arrived on most urgent business. I have shown him to your apartment, where he is waiting your return."

Harel turned to Bonnelet, and desired him to discontinue digging the trench; it was by this time about five feet deep. "Leave your tools where they are, you can widen it to-morrow."* And followed by Aufort he re-

* In the procès-verbal of Bonnelet, he says: "That on returning the next day to finish his work, he found the trench filled up; and he heard afterwards that the Duke d'Enghien had been buried there. It must be remembered that Bonnelet

turned to the château. It was then between five and six o'clock in the evening; he found one of the gendarmerie d'élite splashed with mud, who had evidently ridden hard, and who asked him whether he was able to receive a prisoner of great importance.

"Not at this moment," replied Harel, "there is no room ready; he must either occupy my apartment or the council chamber."

"It does not matter which," was the reply, "only it must be prepared at once, for the prisoner will arrive in a few minutes."

Harel was annoyed at the peremptory tone of the messenger.

"Who sent you, where are your written instructions? It is not for me to obey orders so unformally transmitted."

"I know nothing of that, my commander is Colonel Charlot, who sent me; he is accompanying the prisoner, while I formed one of the escort as far as the barrier of Bondy, and I was ordered to ride on with this message. I do not

was a day-labourer, and did not reside within the walls of the Castle.

belong to the brigade, but am on duty at the barrier, and I have nearly killed my horse by pressing him in order to arrive in time."

"That may be so, but as you have given me no written order I give you no receipt, and now you may go."

But the gendame had just left when Harel received a note from Réal, which said, "An individual, citizen Commander, will arrive immediately at Vincennes; you will take every precaution to receive him safely, the desire of the Government is that the greatest secrecy is to be observed, and no questions whatever are to be asked."

Late in the afternoon of the 20th of March, the carriage arrived at the barrier of La Villette, and then followed the exterior Boulevard. It turned into the Rue de Sèvres and the Rue de Bac, and stopped at the Hôtel Gallifet, Rue Grenelle Saint-Germain, where Talleyrand, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, resided. After half-an-hour's delay, during which the door of the carriage was carefully watched, the postilions received orders to drive to Vincennes.

It was precisely six o'clock when the Prince reached the gate of the gloomy castle; one of the last occupants of the then State-prison was his own illustrious ancestor. Harel received the Duke at the entrance of the sinister-looking building. The Prince was calm and collected; not a word passed between the prisoner and his jailor. He was conducted into a badly-furnished room, where the fire was not yet lit. The Prince, exhausted with fatigue and hunger, seated himself near the fire-place and asked Harel for refreshment.

So little was a guest expected that Aufort was sent into the village to procure some food; he returned with two or three dishes, which he placed on the table that had been prepared by Harel himself. There was a distinction in the Prince's manner which greatly imposed on Harel, who stood at some distance from the table.

"Sir," said the Prince, "I have a favour to ask of you, and I trust you will not consider it an indiscretion. I have a travelling companion, a little greyhound, which has been left

outside, may I ask you to send for him, that I may divide my dinner with him?"

Harel bowed, and himself fetched the poor little Mohiloff, who was crouching in the gloomy passage. When he bounded into the room, the Prince's countenance lit up with a gleam of joy at this association of the past.

After he had finished his frugal supper, the Duke took the dog in his arms and was shewn to his room. Harel and Aufort preceded him with hand-lamps, which cast a pale light on the narrow corridors, and the stairs constructed in the thickness of the wall. All was cold, damp, and melancholy, the air seemed heavy and confined. It was to the top of the tower, occupied by Harel, that the Prince was led; the furniture of the small gloomy turret-room was of the commonest description, and had been hastily collected. There was no carpet; a camp iron-bedstead, a few chairs, a rough table, proved how hurried had been the preparations. The Prince cast a melancholy glance around, for when the heart is loneliest it is the most affected by external impressions. He then asked

for writing materials, which were supplied him. Two sentinels were placed at the door, and he was left to solitude.

It was by this time nine o'clock, a storm of wind and rain was raging outside, and it howled round the lofty turret. Little as the Prince imagined the extent of his misfortune, he felt overpowered by his sad reflexions. A few lines of love were hastily traced, which he hoped might be conveyed to the Princess the next morning; and then, oppressed by his loneliness and sorrow, he threw himself on the bed and fell into that heavy leaden sleep from which the unhappy awaken unrefreshed.

He was aroused by the door opening very gently, and a person entered. This time it was not the Governor, but the Lieutenant of the gendarmerie d'élite, who was appointed especially to watch the Prince. This officer, whose name was Noirot, had formerly served in the regiment Royal-Navarre, commanded by the Count de Crussol, in whose house he had frequently seen the Prince, and the Prince expressed great pleasure at meeting him again.

The Duke looked round as if to see whether, having found a friend, there might not be some means of escape; but the measured tread of the sentinels proved that the door was strictly guarded, and the only window, which was strongly barred, could not be reached from the floor.

"Prince," said M. Noirot, "a century and a half since, one of your ancestors, like yourself, inhabited this fortress; he was released after a few months of captivity. Let us hope that your captivity will not be so long as his."

"True," replied the Prince, "I ought to feel myself in a residence of the Condés; but the great Condé had a garden and flowers. But I hope for something better than this to-morrow—we will anticipate a pleasant change."

At that moment a carriage rolled into the court.

"What can that be?" exclaimed the Prince, starting up. "I trust my poor friends are not to be the companions of my misfortunes."

It was the carriage which brought General Hullin, the President of the Commission, which

was to judge the Duke d'Enghien for treason against the State. He was accompanied by M. Dautencourt, by the Chef-d'Escadron Jacquin and others. M. Dautencourt went immediately to the Prince's room, and informed him that he was charged with the duty of entering into a preliminary examination.

"Why so soon?" said the Prince; "it is not yet twelve o'clock"

"I shall be brief," said M. Dautencourt, much affected, "only a few questions, and I shall leave you to repose."

The examination was not long. The Prince distinctly denied being cognizant of any plots against the First Consul; had such come to his notice, he would have been the first to have denounced them. He was not even acquainted with Dumouriez. He had joined the emigrant corps of his father and grand-father, and when that was disbanded, had resided quietly at Ettenheim; had held latterly very little correspondence with his companions in exile, and had never visited Paris. He replied to all M. Dautencourt's questions with great dignity.

When the examination was terminated, the Prince turned to M. Dautencourt.

" Sir," said he, " before I sign the procès-verbal, I demand, persistently demand, an audience of the First Consul. My name, my rank, my misfortunes, entitle me to make this demand, which he cannot refuse me."

The Prince then took the pen, and wrote his demand on the procès-verbal itself, so that it could not be overlooked; after this, M. Dautencourt signed it, and promised it should be scrupulously delivered into the First Consul's hands. By what terrible fatality was it that this promise was never fulfilled?

CHAPTER VI.

SHORTLY after the arrival of the Duke at Vincennes, a large force under the command of Savary was despatched from Paris. The troops consisted of two regiments of the Line and a detachment of the gendarmerie d'élite. The infantry were placed at the gates, while the gendarmes entered the Court. Harel was ordered immediately to prepare a room called the Pavillon de la Porte-du-bois, for the reception of a Council of War. A long table was placed in it, logs of wood were thrown around, and the glow cast around gave an appearance of comfort to the old and gloomy hall. Chairs were placed for the President Hullin, and the other officers who accompanied

him. They consisted of Colonels Guitton, Bazancourt, Ravier, Barrois, Rable, and Citizen Dautencourt, who had already taken down the Duke's statement. So suddenly had the Commission been sent from Paris, that they arrived without any documents, or even any written accusation; the only paper produced was the procès-verbal which the Prince had just signed, and which Dautencourt produced.

M. Thiers tells us that the First Consul ordered Savary from the Falaise de Béville to Malmaison, that he himself drew up the orders and signed them, desired Savary to take them to Murat, and then to proceed to Vincennes to see them executed. These instructions were complete and positive; they contained the composition of the Commission, and the designation of the officers of the garrison who were to sit upon it, with General Hullin as President. They were ordered to meet without delay, and to terminate in one night, and as there could be no doubt that the sentence would be death, it was to be carried out without any delay.

The historic painter could select no scene more striking than this Judgment Hall of Vincennes on this mournful occasion. The bare walls and timbered roof, dimly lit by the common hand-lamps which were ranged down the table, and the silence which prevailed, broken only by the storm which raged without. The President, in full uniform, took his seat at the end of the table, and the members of the Council (worthy, if any Council ever was worthy, of the name of the Council of Blood) on each side of him. Every countenance was marked with that anxiety which the worst men must feel before they commit a predetermined, shameful crime; but if any of these so-called judges possessed feelings of compunction and remorse, they dared not show them in the presence of Savary, who stood with his back turned towards the fire, overlooking the proceedings. Gendarmes were stationed at the door of the hall, and only permitted those few officers of the Castle to enter whose rank prevented their being refused. It was well such a deed should

be done in the gloom and darkness of night.

The silence was now broken by one of the Court asking for the Act of Accusation.

"There is none," was the President's reply.

"Where are the witnesses?" asked another.

"There are no witnesses."

"And the Counsel for the prisoner?" said Hullin.

"There is no Counsel within the walls of the Castle," was the Governor's answer.

No documents, no witnesses, no counsel; even Savary, the great actor in this judicial tragedy, seemed moved. The crime was not well organized.

After a solemn pause, Hullin ordered the prisoner to be introduced.

The Prince was dressed in a blue frock-coat buttoned to the throat, blue pantaloons, and boots à la Suwaroff, with spurs; he wore a cap with a gold band. He seemed perfectly

calm and composed, and his countenance bore slighter traces of anxiety than the faces of his judges.

Two o'clock struck before the proceedings commenced by the President asking the question—

"Have you fought against the Republic?"

"I have fought for the King to recover his throne and the inheritance of my ancestors."

"Have you ever conspired against the life of the First Consul?"

"Is it, Sir, to the Duke d'Enghien, to a Condé, that such a question is put, or an answer is expected?"

And then the Prince, carried away by the current of his ideas, recalled the glories of his illustrious ancestors, his own well-known life, the great services of the House of Condé to France, the claim which he possessed on the affections of every Frenchman; and when the President interrupted him by again suggesting the possibility of his participation in

the conspiracy of Georges, the Prince exclaimed :—

"Sir, I have already answered you, no; that such an act was impossible!"

And in a fit of indignation, he threw his cap on the floor and stamped on it.

Hullin's anger was then roused.

"Sir," said he, "you insist on your high birth, on your great name, all this we are well aware of; but it is not to the purpose, you are asked questions, and this is your answer. Take care, this conduct may lead to evil results. Do you try to persuade us that you have been indifferent to the events passing around you?—it is impossible to believe it. Again, Sir, I warn you to take care, this mode of replying to the interrogatories may turn out most prejudicial to you."

On being addressed in these terms, the blood mounted into the Prince's face, and it was with increased animation he continued,

"President, I have not professed indifference to these important events; on the contrary, I have fought for legitimate rights, to raise again

the throne, overthrown by factions, it was not against my country but against the revolution that I took up arms, that revolution which built up scaffolds, and which France regarded with horror and execration."

Up to this moment nothing had occurred that could afford even these instruments of the First Consul any excuse for passing judgment on th Prince; in taking arms against the Revolution, in striking down factions, he had but imitated the conduct of Buonaparte himself, but unhappily his excitement carried him away. Hullin's object was to entice him into an admission, that he was meditating at the present time operations against the government of the First Consul. The Prince fell into the snare. Hullin, in the most insolent tone, repeated the question he had already insisted on, regarding the conspiracy of Georges.

"It is false that I had any connection with the conspiracy," exclaimed the Prince. Ah! if he had stopped there; but he was urged on by a terrible destiny to utter the words that decided his fate. "But I was not for that reason

indifferent to passing events. I applied to England to let me serve in her Army, and my request was denied; but I was told that if I remained on the frontier I should soon be able to play a great part. This is why I remained at Ettenheim; I was waiting, Sir. I have nothing more to say." The Prince terminated by once more demanding an interview with the First Consul.

This was a terrible avowal, for it was no longer revolutionary France and the guillotine en permanence that he was prepared to attack; it was the established government of France.*

* Savary, Duke de Rovigo, says in his Memoirs: "This was exactly the reply of the Prince, I quote from memory, but every word is engraven on it. I have not forgotten a syllable;" and Savary then continues, "These important words decided the fate of the Prince. He had already admitted that he had received pecuniary assistance from London, and it was easy to transform this pension into a payment in aid of these conspiracies. The Court, after this admission, was closed, and I retired with my officers to rejoin my troops on the esplanade."

The Baron de Menneval says: "Unhappily this declaration of the Prince, that he was waiting for orders on the Rhine,

This answer sealed his doom. The hall was cleared, and the Court deliberated with closed doors on the several questions proposed by the President, and after a brief delay the Court decided unanimously that Louis Antoine Henri, Duc d'Enghien, was guilty on all the counts.

1. Of having taken arms against the Republic.

2. Of having offered his services to the English Government.

3. Of having seen accredited English agents.

4. Of having placed himself at the head of an Emigrant force paid by England.

5. Of having secret intelligence with agents in Strasburg, enemies to France.

6. Of having been a party to conspiracies against the life of the First Consul.

exposed him to every suspicion. This avowal made to a Court, appointed under the strictest Military Code, was a sufficient cause of condemnation. The officers, members of this Court, were honorable men, and never would have degraded themselves into being only the instruments of a sanguinary decree. "No instructions," says Napoleon, "should influence the conscience of a judge." Posterity has not confirmed the Baron de Menneval's opinion.

And he was sentenced to death, "et ordonne que le présent jugement sera exécuté de suite à la diligence du Capitaine Rapporteur." 'De suite,' although by the law of the 15 Brumaire, An VI., all sentences of courts-martial must be revised, and by the 27 Ventôse, An VIII., everyone sentenced by a court-martial has the power of appeal.

This judgment was signed by all the members of the Court. Then the President Hullin sent for the Governor Harel, and telling him of the sentence, added that he had orders to have it executed at once. As M. Saint-Hilaire exclaims,

"Who could have given this order? Who dared to execute a Condé without the express command of the Chief of the State, now at Malmaison?" M. Thiers has explained this.

An officer of the gendarmerie was sent to have a grave dug, as we have seen the Governor had anticipated this. Had Harel received some secret information, or was it a terrible coincidence that made him have a trench dug ostensibly to bury rubbish, but which was destined to serve for the illustrious victim? Savary was

taken to the place in the fosse; but the trench was found to be too narrow and another spot was selected nearer where the ground was softer. The grave dug, not by the soldiers, but by the gendarmes d'élite. The Biographie des Contemporains says, "Il faut le dire pour la vérité de l'histoire, le crime fût consommé non pas par des soldats, mais par les gendarmes d'élite.

CHAPTER VII.

BY the law of France, the Governor of any citadel had to preside at the execution. After Harel was informed of the sentence, followed by the Brigadier Aufort, who carried a lantern, he went to the room of the condemned prisoner; he was so fast asleep that even the noise of the door and sudden light in the room failed to rouse him, and Harel had to shake his arm.

"Why am I again disturbed?" he exclaimed with a faltering voice.

Harel informed him that he must rise and dress immediately, and the Prince complied at once.

When he was dressed, Harel took the Prince's

arm, and holding a lantern in the other hand, he led him, not to the stair by which he had ascended, but by a winding stair which led directly into the Court of the Castle.

"Where are you leading me to?" said the Prince.

"Sir, I can answer no questions; but you will require all your courage."

As they continued to descend the time-worn crumbling steps, the two lanterns, one held by Harel, the other by Aufort, who followed, scarcely gave light sufficient to walk with safety. At the foot of the stairs there was a corridor; when the Prince felt the chill morning air, he again exclaimed:

"If I am to be buried alive in a prison, I prefer to die at once."

Harel, profoundly moved, could only again reply: "Sir, summon all your courage."

A sudden turn of the corridor brought them to another smaller stair. This again they descended, and found themselves in the fosse. The grey mist of early morning prevented the Prince clearly distinguishing the objects round him.

On one side was the Castle wall, on the other the steep earth-work; gradually he could distinguish figures moving on the top of the mound, and saw that troops were massed behind them, while a picket of infantry was drawn up in front of him. Turning to the right, he perceived a grave dug by his side; it told him at once why he was standing there. The courage of his race was not wanting in this supreme moment.

"Thank God!" he said, "I am to die a soldier's death."

When M. Dautencourt stepped forward to read the sentence of the court-martial, the Prince stood with folded arms, perfectly calm and collected. When the report was concluded, the Prince said, "May God forgive my judges, even as I forgive them. Gentlemen, you will do your duty; but, at least, I hope I shall be allowed to see a priest."

"He wishes to die like a capuchin," said a cruel voice from among the few officers who were standing at the edge of the ditch.

The Duke then, with a manner full of dignity,

turned to the picket, and said, "Gentlemen, is there any one of you who will undertake an important mission, and fulfil my last wishes?"

There was an ominous silence.

"Gentlemen," he repeated, "is there no one who will render a service to a dying man?"

None of the detachment replied; but M. Noirot, wbo was standing near the Prince, stepped forward.

M. Noirot, I have a favour to ask you."

The officer laid his hand on his heart and bowed; the Duke, speaking very low, said, "Can I depend on your fulfilling my last wishes?"

Again M. Noirot laid his hand on his heart, the Prince advanced towards the picket.

"Can anyone lend me a pair of scissors?"

The word passed down the ranks; one of the soldiers happened to have a pair; the Prince took them and cut off a lock of his hair; he then took a ring off his finger, and folded both in a piece of paper; he delivered them to M. Noirot, and in a low voice charged him to see that they were delivered to the Princess de Rohan.

M. Noirot then returned, and the Prince turned to the firing party.

"My friends."

"You have no friends here," was the atrocious reply, uttered from above; it was the same mocking voice that had answered when he demanded a confessor.

The Duke, whom the fear of death failed to overcome, turned pale at this brutal remark.

The adjutant, Delga, who commanded the firing party, advanced to the Duke, took him by the arm, and led him a few steps nearer to the soldiers; then, horrible to relate, it is asserted in the "Biographie des Contemporains," that, the fog being still very dense, by Savary's order he fastened a lamp to his breast; this horrible detail is, however, denied by Savary.

"Sir, you must kneel," said Delga.

"I never kneel except to God," was the reply.

M. Delga handed him a handkerchief and offered to blind his eyes.

"Sir," said the Duke, "I have faced death on many a battle-field, I can look at it now."

The adjutant turned to the soldiers, and ordered them to prepare.

"Aim at the heart," cried the Prince.

The adjutant raised his sword, the order was given to fire; the Duke fell forward; the soldiers had aimed well, the horrible murder was consummated.

After the explosion there was an awful stillness, broken only by plaintive cries which issued from the tower where the Prince had been confined—the poor little greyhound, the faithful companion, the gift of her he loved so well, had been forgotten.

All was over, the body was taken up and cast into the grave, the earth was hastily filled in; Savary ordered the withdrawal of the troops, and the actors in this pitiable tragedy left the scene. When the morning fully dawned, there was nothing to indicate that a victim of Buonaparte lay murdered in the ditch, except a little dog who attracted attention to the spot by its piteous cries. It had discovered the spot where

its master lay, and was the only mourner at the grave of the last of the Condés.*

* In a "Notice Historique sur Louis Antoine Henri de Bourbon Condé, Duc d'Enghien, Prince du Sang Royal," published soon after the execution on the 26th April, 1804, are these words:

"Trois heures se passent entre la condamnation et l'exécution. Enfin l'heure fatale sonne; le Duc d'Enghien remet les cheveux, avec la prière de les envoyer à la Princesse Charlotte de Rohan-Rochefort. Quelques-uns disent qu'il ajouta, 'A ma légitime et malheureuse épouse.' Il part à la lueur des lanternes, et peu de temps après le coup fatal tranche cette vie le 22 Mars, 1804."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN on the 22nd of March, 1804, the *Moniteur* announced, in the same number, the arrest, the trial, and the condemnation of the Duke d'Enghien, a mournful stupor fell on the city of Paris; red-handed Savary returned to his chief. He found Murat still in bed; he recounted all these terrible events. The bold attitude and manly resignation of the Prince; his condemnation and execution; his demand for an interview with the First Consul.

"As he continued," Count Ségur states, "Murat burst into tears, while Caroline Buonaparte interrupted the narrative by her exclamations—'Oh horror! horror! stop, stop; it is too terrible!'"

Count Ségur continues to relate that the same morning he attended on the Chief of the Staff, General Duroc, he met on the stair the Adjutant-Major; his countenance was livid, and betrayed the most painful anxiety. On being questioned, he exclaimed:

"I may well be overcome after the events of the night. A thunder-bolt has fallen on France."

Ségur, unenlightened by this expression, entered into the presence of Duroc. Hullin was there; he seemed very agitated. The Adjutant-Major approached and spoke to Hullin, who repeated several times:

"It was well done! it is better to kill the devil than for the devil to kill you!"

Count Ségur, still ignorant of the meaning of this disturbance, approached Hullin and asked whether it was true the Duke d'Enghien had been arrested. "Yes, and he is dead!" he answered abruptly. M. d'Aulincourt added, "He was shot in the ditch at five this morning." He then drew out of his pocket a small paper,

and added with an indifference that made every-one shudder.

" This paper contains some of his hair, given to me by M. Noirot, which he desired should be delivered to the Princess de Rohan."

The tone with which this was said caused a general sensation.

What was the attitude of Buonaparte? Ségur persuades himself, and endeavours to persuade his readers that at the last moment, after days and hours of indecision, he consented that Réal should proceed the next morning to Vincennes, himself interrogate the Prince, and delay the execution in the event of the trial having been concluded; that this order was forwarded to Réal very late at night, and as he had given orders not to be disturbed, he only received Buonaparte's communication at five in the morning, at which hour the murder was committed.

M. de Saint-Hilaire mentions that, as Savary was returniug to Paris at six on the morning of the execution, he met the carriage of

Réal. On a sign from Savary the horses were stopped.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"To Vincennes," replied the Councillor of State. "I received this morning an order from the First Consul, written last night, to proceed to Vincennes and interrogate the Duke d'Enghien."

"Well, it is useless," answered Savary; and he related all that had passed.

Réal fell back in his carriage with an exclamation of horror and surprise. After a few moments, he in turn asked Savary where he was going.

"To Malmaison," he answered, "to see the First Consul."

The carriage then rolled on to Paris, Réal in despair at his fatally prolonged slumber.

Savary proceeded on his mission. He found Joséphine with Buonaparte. When Savary recounted the occurrences of the night, Joséphine exclaimed:—

"Oh, mon ami, qu'as-tu fait."

And Buonaparte replied:—

"Les malheureux ont été trop vite!"

He then threw himself into a chair, and fell into a kind of stupor; his eyes were fixed, his face was livid. After a long pause he said:—

"There was consolation in everything; that without doubt, if he had been assassinated by the agents of the Prince, the Duc d'Enghien would have been the first to appear in France; that now there was no resource but to accept this responsibility. To put it on others would seem an act of cowardice, and he never would be guilty of this weakness."

Seldom has any death produced such an overwhelming effect. All Paris assumed a sombre aspect. The barriers were closed, as in the turbulent days of the Revolution. Men spoke to each other in tremulous tones; the Angel of Death seemed to unfold its wings over the city. Men whispered, if one so noble by race and nature, so illustrious, brave, in the bloom of life, could fall the victim of a foul judicial murder, who could be henceforth safe?

After the first interview with Savary, Buonaparte shut himself up at Malmaison, and no one was admitted there except his family and the Ministers. On learning from them the effect produced in Paris by this terrible event, he became still more gloomy. In his anxiety, dreading lest any remark might be made in the Legislative Assembly, in the closing speech which was read by the Councillor of State, he spoke of the conspiracy which had been discovered, and of the intrigues of the Bourbons. The speech to the Legislative Assembly was delivered, but the President, in his reply, preserved a profound silence on the question of the Duc d'Enghien. On that day Buonaparte entered unexpectedly the Council of State. It was remarked how greatly he was agitated; his step was hurried, his brow knit; he appeared entirely overcome, and flung himself into his chair.

This, however, was not the First Consul's attitude before the general public. The first time he attended mass, and was in the presence of the people, a great crowd thronged

the galleries of the Tuileries, curious to watch his countenance. Ségur describes the uneasy attitude of all the Court, while through the tears which filled my eyes, he writes, "I noted his countenance as he knelt in prayer. I could perceive no change in his expression, he bore the appearance of a judge, severe and implacable. I had seen him before God," continues the historian, "I wished to observe his attitude before men. I followed close in his suite, he seemed calm but constrained, and sombre, rather more courteous than on other occasions. He moved slowly—slower than usual, through the great apartments; he also looked as if he wished to observe; he stopped frequently, permitting the attendants to approach him, and addressing a few words to each, it seemed, as if in spite of himself, that all his observations had reference to the recent events, and he paused in the hope of catching some observation which could give him comfort; he only heard one so clumsily expressed that he hurriedly turned away from the speaker."

Group after group surrounded him, and listened with an anxious curiosity and mournful, disapproving silence.

He gradually became colder and more reserved, when he spoke his expression was haughty and severe.

He retired abruptly, dissatisfied but inflexible, seemingly not more shaken by this universal disavowal, than he was subsequently when the subject was discussed on other occasions, as we learn from his Memoirs even at his last hour at Saint Helena.*

* Las Cases, writes in 1826, at St. Helena, " La première fois que je lui entends prononcer le nom du Duc d'Enghien j'en devins rouge d'embarras; heureusement je marchai dans un sentier étroit, autrement il n'en a pu pas manquer de s'en apercevoir. Après avoir parlé du sort de l'infortuné, il disait, ' Et j'ai appris depuis, mon cher, qu'il m'était favorable. On m'assure qu'il ne parlait pas de moi sans admiration, et voilà pourtant la justice distributive d'ici-bas. Cette affaire aurait pu laisser en moi des regrets; mais non créer des remords, pas même des scrupules. Ma grande maxime a toujours été, que dans la guerre, comme dans la politique, tout mal n'est excusable qu'autant qu'il est absolument nécessaire; tout ce qui est au-delà est crime.'

It is a frequent characteristic of those who have committed a great crime, that, instead of blotting it from their memory, they are impulsively compelled to dwell upon the subject, the conscience is haunted by a spectre. It was so with Napoleon, the pale phantom of his victim was ever present to him, and he could only relieve his mind by allusions to that miserable part, while the cruelty of the deed was magnified by his admiration of the noble race of which the Duke d'Enghien was the last. A bust of the illustrious Condé stood in the magnificent

"On another occasion, he said: 'Assurément si j'eusse été instruit à temps de certaines particularités concernant les opinions et la nature de ce Prince; si j'avais vu la lettre qu'il m'écrivit, et qu'on ne me remit, Dieu sait pour quels motifs, qu'après qu'il n'était plus, bien certainement je l'eusse pardonné.'"

A pamphlet entitled: "L'assassino del Duca d'Enghien," states: "The Court, after the trial, wrote to Buonaparte, 'Per sapere qual erà la sua risoluzione, che rimandò la lettera colle tre parole 'Condamnato al morte.'"

Jomini, quotes the Emperor, "Le désir de me plaire excita les chefs de la police à dévoiler le traitre; quelques lettres saisies suffirent pour me décider à faire enlever le Prince."

gallery of Diana, and it is said Buonaparte never passed it without saluting the great captain, he himself was wont to recount how after Rocroy, when Condé arrived at the Tuileries to pay his respect to the King, the Grand Monarque waited for his victorious subject at the head of the great stairs, and when Condé excused himself for not advancing quicker in consequence of his wound, Louis XIV. in his royal and grand courtsey said, "Monsieur de Condé quand on est chargé de lauriers comme toi c'est bien difficile de marcher." Strange coincidence, the day after the murder of the Duke d'Enghien, Buonaparte found the bust of Condé fallen from its pedestal, and broken in pieces.

While defending his own acts against the judgment of posterity, the person who the Emperor accused of being the active cause of this murder was Talleyrand. It is reported of the Prince, that the night of the execution, he was gambling; the grey dawn saw him still at the table. He pulled out his watch and exclaimed:

"Six o'clock, the Duke d'Enghien has ceased to exist."

If this terrible incident is incorrect, at any rate he shewed his indifference to an event that filled all Paris with horror, by giving a ball the next night, to which all the diplomatic body were invited, but which scarcely any attended. Certain it is, that from this date Buonaparte hated and distrusted Talleyrand.

Ségur says "that, after the Capitulation of Baylen, Napoleon bitterly reproached him, 'comment il osait se dire étranger à la mort du Duc d'Enghien, ainsi que de la déchéance des Bourbons d'Espagne, quand c'était lui qui les lui avait conseillés de vive voix et même par écrit."

The exact truth as to the actors in this tragedy may never be known. It was a murder accomplished in darkness and mystery, and the full light of day has never dawned upon it; but Heaven's justice fell on all who had any part in this deed of blood. Most of the judges died under painful circumstances, after each had vainly endeavoured to relieve himself from his share

in the catastrophe. Well may Count Hullin have exclaimed after twenty years of bitter and unavailing regrets, "Nous sommes tous bien malheureux."

THE END.

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